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1817
ARTES SCIENTIA VERITAS

ELOISA.

VOL. IV.

ELOISA:

OR,

A SERIES

OF

ORIGINAL LETTERS

COLLECTED AND PUBLISHED BY

Mr. J. J. ROUSSEAU,

CITIZEN OF GENEVA.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

A NEW EDITION:

TO WHICH IS NOW FIRST ADDED,

THE SEQUEL OF JULIA;

OR, *THE NEW ELOISA.*

(Found amongſt the Author's Papers after his Deceaſe.)

TOGETHER WITH A PORTRAIT OF MONS. ROUSSEAU.

VOL. IV.

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ELOISA.

LETTER CXL.

FROM LORD B——.

I Find, by your two laſt letters, that a former one is miſſing, apparently the firſt you wrote me from the army, and in which you accounted for Mrs. Wolmar's ſecret uneaſineſs. Not having received that letter, I imagine it was in the mail of one of our couriers, who was taken; you will, therefore, be pleaſed to recommunicate its contents. I am at a loſs to conjecture what they were, and am uneaſy about them. For again I ſay, if happineſs and peace dwell not in Eloiſa's mind I know not where they will find an aſylum on earth. You may make her eaſy as to the dangers ſhe imagines we are here expoſed to; we have to do with an enemy too expert to ſuffer us to purſue him. With a handful of men, he baffles our attempts, and deprives us of all opportunity to attack him. As we are very ſanguine, however, we may probably raiſe difficulties which the beſt generals would not be able to ſurmount, and at length oblige the French to fight us. I foreſee our firſt ſucceſs will coſt us dear, and

that the victory we gained at Dettingen will make us loſe one in Flanders. We make head againſt a very able commander. Nor is this all; he poſſeſſes the love and confidence of his troops, and the French ſoldiers when they have a good opinion of their leader are *invincible**. On the contrary, they are good for ſo little when they are commanded by courtiers they deſpiſe, that frequently their enemies need only to watch the intrigues of the cabinet, and ſeiſe a proper opportunity to vanquiſh with certainty the braveſt people on the continent: this they very well know. The Duke of Marlborough, taking notice of the good look and martial air of a French ſoldier, taken priſoner at the battle of Blenheim, told him, "If the French army had been compoſed of fifty thouſand ſuch men as he, it would not have been ſo eaſily beaten:"— "Zounds, Sir (replied the grenadier) there are men enough in it like me, but it wants ſuch a man as you." Now, ſuch a man at preſent commands the French troops, and is on our ſide wanting; but we have courage, and trouble ourſelves little about that. At all events, however, I intend to ſee their operations for the remainder of the campaign, and am reſolved not to leave the army till it goes into winter-quarters. We ſhall all be gainers by ſuch a delay: the ſeaſon being too far advanced for us to

* The tranſlator cannot help obſerving, that it was extraordinary in M. Rouſſeau to put ſuch a falſe, ridiculous aſſertion in the mouth of an Engliſhman.

to think of croſſing the mountains this year, I ſhall ſpend the winter with you, and not go to Italy till the beginning of the ſpring. Tell Mr. and Mrs. Wolmar I have thus changed my deſign, that I may have more time to contemplate that affecting picture you ſo pathetically deſcribe, and that I may have alſo the opportunity to ſee Mrs. Orbe ſettled with them. Continue, my dear Sir, to write with your uſual punctuality, and you will do me a greater pleaſure than ever: my equipage having been taken by the enemy, I have no books, but amuſe myſelf in reading over your letters.

LETTER CXLI.

TO LORD B——.

WHAT pleaſure does your lordſhip give me, in acquainting me with your deſign of paſſing the winter with us at Clarens! but how dearly you make me pay for it, by prolonging your ſtay at the army! What diſpleaſes me moſt, however, is to perceive that your reſolution of making a campaign was fixed before we parted, though you mentioned nothing of it to me. I ſee, my lord, your reaſon for keeping it a ſecret, and cannot be pleaſed with you for it. Did you deſpiſe me ſo much as to think me unfit to accompany you? or have you ever known me mean enough to be attached to any thing I ſhould prefer to the honour of

dying with my friend? But, if it was improper for me to follow you to the army, you ſhould at leaſt have left me in London; that would have diſpleaſed me leſs than your ſending me hither.

By your laſt letter, I am convinced that one of mine is indeed miſſing; the loſs of which muſt have rendered the two ſucceeding ones in many reſpects obſcure; but the neceſſary explanations to make them intelligible ſhall be ſoon tranſmitted to you. What is at preſent more particularly needful, is to remove your uneaſineſs concerning that of Mrs. Wolmar.

I ſhall not take upon me to give you a regular continuation of the diſcourſe we had together after the departure of her huſband. Many things have ſince intervened that make me forget great part of it, and it was reſumed at ſo many different times during his abſence, that I ſhall content myſelf, to avoid repetition, with giving you a ſummary of the whole.

In the firſt place, ſhe told me, that Mr. Wolmar, who neglected nothing in his power to make her happy, was nevertheleſs the ſole authour of all her diſquietude: and that the more ſincere their mutual attachment grew, the greater was her affliction. Would you think it, my lord? This gentleman, ſo prudent, ſo reaſonable, ſo little addicted to any kind of vice, ſo little ſubject to the tyranny of human paſſions, knows nothing of that faith which gives virtue all its merit; and in the innocence of an irreproach-

able

able life, feels only at the bottom of his heart the dreadful tranquillity of the unbeliever. The reflexion which ariſes from this contraſt in principle and morals ſerves but to aggravate Eloiſa's grief; ſhe would think him even leſs culpable in diſregarding the authour of his Being, had he more reaſon to dread his anger, or preſumption to brave his power. That the guilty ſhould be led to appeaſe their conſciences at the expenſe of truth; that the pride of thinking differently from the vulgar may induce others to embrace errour, ſhe can readily conceive; but, continued ſhe ſighing, how a man ſo virtuous, and ſo little vain of his underſtanding, ſhould be an infidel, ſurpaſſes my conception!

But, before I proceed farther, it will be neceſſary to inform you of the peculiar character of this married couple. You are to conceive them as living ſolely for each other, and conſtantly taken up with their family; it being neceſſary to know the ſtrictneſs of the union ſubſiſting between them, to comprehend how their difference of ſentiments in this one article is capable of diſturbing it. Mr. Wolmar, educated in the cuſtoms of the Greek church, was not one of thoſe who could ſupport the abſurdity of ſuch ridiculous worſhip. His underſtanding, ſuperior to the feeble yoke impoſed on it, ſoon ſhook it off with contempt; rejecting, at the ſame time, every thing offered to his belief on ſuch doubtful

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ELOISA.

VOL. IV.

forms a part of her exiſtence, cannot partake of that hope which makes her exiſtence dear; not to be able to join him in praiſe and gratitude to the Deity, nor to converſe with him on the bleſſed futurity we have to hope from his goodneſs! to ſee him inſenſible, in doing good, to every thing which ſhould make virtue agreeable to us; and, with the ſtrangeſt abſurdity, thinking like an infidel and acting as a chriſtian. Imagine her walking abroad with her huſband; the one admiring, in the beautiful verdure of ſpring, or golden fruits of autumn, the power and beneficence of the great Creator of all things; the other ſeeing in them nothing but a fortuitous combination of atoms, united only by chance. Imagine to yourſelf the ſituation of a married couple, having a ſincere regard for each other, who, for fear of giving offenſe, dare not indulge themſelves in ſuch ſentiments or reflexions as the objects around them inſpire; but who are bound in duty, even from their reciprocal affections, to lay themſelves under continual reſtraint. Eloiſa and I hardly ever walk out together, but ſome ſtriking or pictureſque object puts her in mind of this diſagreeable circumſtance. "Alas! (ſaid ſhe with great emotion to me one day) this beautiful proſpect before us, ſo lively, ſo animating in our eyes, is a dead and lifeleſs ſcene in thoſe of the unfortunate Wolmar. In all that harmony of created beings which nature diſplays, in vain do

they unite to ſpeak their maker's praiſe: Mr. Wolmar perceives only a profound and eternal ſilence."

You who know Eloiſa, who know what delight her communicative mind takes in imparting its ſentiments; think what ſhe muſt ſuffer by ſuch conſtraint, even though it were attended with no other inconvenience than that unſocial reſerve which is peculiarly diſagreeable between two perſons ſo intimately connected. But Eloiſa has much greater cauſe of uneaſineſs. In vain does ſhe oppoſe thoſe involuntary terrours, thoſe dreadful ideas that ruſh upon her mind. They return with redoubled force, and diſturb every moment of her life. How horrid muſt it be for ſuch an affectionate wife to think the Supreme Being is the avenger of his offended attributes! to think the happineſs of him on whom her own depends muſt end with his life; and to behold a reprobate of God in the father of her children! All her ſweetneſs of diſpoſition can hardly preſerve her from falling into deſpair at this horrible idea; her religion only, which makes her feel for the infidelity of her huſband, yielding her ſtrength to ſupport it. "If heaven (ſays ſhe ſometimes) refuſes me the converſion of this honeſt man, I have but one bleſſing to aſk; which is, that I may die before him."

Such, my lord, is the too juſt cauſe of Eloiſa's chagrin; ſuch is the ſecret affliction which preys on her mind, and is aggravated by the care ſhe takes to conceal it. Atheiſm, which ſtalks abroad undiſguiſed among the Papiſts, is

obliged to hide its head in every country, where reaſon, giving a ſanction to religion, deprives infidels of all excuſe. Its principles are naturally deſtructive; and though they find partizans among the rich and great, who promote them, they are held in the utmoſt horrour by an oppreſſed and miſerable people; who, ſeeing their tyrants thus freed from the only curb to reſtrain their inſolence, comfort themſelves with the hope of another life, their only conſolation in this. Mrs. Wolmar, foreſeeing the ill conſequences of her huſband's ſcepticiſm, and being deſirous to preſerve her children from the bad effects of ſo dangerous an example, prevailed on him to keep his principles a ſecret; to which ſhe found no great trouble to perſuade a man, who, though honeſt and ſincere, is yet diſcreet, unaffected, without vanity, and far from wiſhing to deprive others of a bleſſing which he himſelf cannot enjoy. In conſequence of this, he keeps his tenets to himſelf; he goes to church with us; conforms himſelf to cuſtom; and without making a verbal confeſſion of what he does not believe avoids giving ſcandal, and pays all that reſpect to the eſtabliſhed religion of the country which the ſtate has a right to demand of its citizens.

They have been married now almoſt eight years, during which time Mrs. Orbe only has been in the ſecret; nor probably would ſhe of herſelf ever have diſcovered it. Such care indeed is taken to ſave appearances, and with ſo little affectation, that, after having ſpent ſix

weeks

weeks together in the greateſt intimacy, I had not the leaſt ſuſpicion; and ſhould perhaps never have known Mr. Wolmar's ſentiments on religious matters, if Eloiſa herſelf had not apprized me of them.

Several motives determined her to that confidence: In the firſt place, a too great reſerve would have been incompatible with the friendſhip that ſubſiſts between us. Again, it would be only aggravating her uneaſineſs at her own coſt, to deny herſelf the conſolation of ſharing it with a friend. She was, beſides, unwilling that my preſence ſhould be long an obſtacle to the converſation they frequently held together on a ſubject ſhe had ſo much at heart. In ſhort, knowing you intended ſoon to join us here, ſhe was deſirous, with the conſent of her huſband, that you ſhould be previouſly made acquainted with his ſentiments; as ſhe hopes to find, from your prudence and abilities, a ſupplement to our hitherto fruitleſs efforts, worthy of your character.

The opportunity ſhe laid hold of to place this confidence in me made me ſuſpect alſo another reaſon, which, however, ſhe herſelf never inſinuated. Her huſband had juſt left us; we lived formerly together; our hearts had been enamoured of each other; they ſtill remembered their former tranſports; had they now forgot themſelves but for a moment, we had been plunged into guilt and infamy. I ſaw plainly ſhe was fearful of our private converſations, and

ſought

ſought to prevent the conſequences ſhe feared; and I was myſelf too well convinced, by the remembrance of what happened at Meillerie, that they who confide leaſt in themſelves are the ſafeſt to be truſted.

Under thoſe groundleſs apprehenſions which her natural timidity inſpired, ſhe conceived ſhe could take no better precaution than always to have a witneſs to our converſation, whoſe preſence could not fail of being reſpected; and to call in, as a third perſon, the aweful and upright judge who ſearches the heart, and is privy to the moſt ſecret actions of men. Thus, committing herſelf to the immediate protection of the divinity, I found the Deity always between us. What criminal deſire could ever aſſail ſuch a ſafeguard? My heart grew refined by her zeal, and I partook of her virtue.

Thus, the graveſt topicks of diſcourſe took up almoſt all our private conferences in the abſence of her huſband; and ſince his return we have reſumed them frequently in his preſence. He attends to our converſation, as if he was not at all concerned; and, without deſpiſing our endeavours, ſometimes adviſes us in our method of argument. It is this which makes me deſpair of ſucceſs; for had he leſs ſincerity, one might attack that vicious faculty of the mind that nouriſhes his infidelity; but if we are to convince him by dint of reaſoning, where ſhall we find information that has eſcaped his knowledge, or arguments that have eluded

his

his ſagacity? For my part, when I have undertaken to diſpute with him, I have found that all mine have been before exauſted to no purpoſe by Eloiſa; and that my reaſoning fell far ſhort of that pathetick eloquence which, dictated by the heart, flowed in perſuaſive accents from her tongue. I fear, my lord, we ſhall never make a convert of this man. He is too frigid, not immoral; his paſſions are not to be moved; ſenſibility, that innate proof of the truth of religion, is wanting; and the want of this alone is enough to invalidate all others.

Notwithſtanding Eloiſa's care to diſguiſe her uneaſineſs from him, he knows and partakes of it; his diſcernment will not permit him to be impoſed on. His own chagrin, therefore, on account of her's is but too apparent. Hence he has been tempted ſeveral times to affect a change of ſentiments; and, for the ſake of Eloiſa's peace, to adopt tenets he could not in fact believe: but his ſoul was above the meanneſs of hypocriſy. This diſſimulation, inſtead of impoſing on Eloiſa, would only have afforded a new cauſe of ſorrow. That ſincerity, that frankneſs, that union of hearts, which now comfort them under their afflictions, would then have no more ſubſiſted between them. Was it by making himſelf leſs worthy her eſteem that he could hope to calm her fears? No; inſtead, therefore, of deceiving her, he tells her plainly his thoughts; but this he does in a manner ſo ſimple and *unaffected*, ſo little diſdainful of received opinions,

opinions; ſo unlike that ironical, contemptuous behaviour of pretended free-thinkers, that ſuch melancholy confeſſions are extremely afflicting. As ſhe cannot, however, inſpire her huſband with that faith and hope with which ſhe herſelf is animated, ſhe ſtudies with the more aſſiduity to indulge him in all thoſe tranſient pleaſures to which his happineſs is confined. "Alas! (ſays ſhe weeping) if the poor unfortunate has his heaven in this life, let us make it at leaſt as agreeable to him as poſſible*!"

That veil of ſorrow, which this difference in opinion throws over their union, gives a further proof of the irreſiſtible aſcendant of Eloiſa, in the conſolation with which that affliction is tempered, and which, perhaps, no other perſon in the world would be able to apply. All their altercations, all their diſputes, on this important point, ſo far from giving riſe to ill-nature, contempt, or anger, generally end in ſome affecting ſcene, which the more endears them to each other.

Our converſation falling yeſterday upon the ſame ſubject, as it frequently does when we three are by ourſelves, we were led into a diſpute concerning the origin of evil, in which I endeavoured

* How much more natural is this humane ſentiment, than the horrid zeal of perſecutors, always employed in tormenting the unbeliever, as if, to damn him in this life, they themſelves were the forerunners of devils. I ſhall ever continue to repeat it, a perſecutor of others cannot *be a true* believer himſelf.

endeavoured to prove, that no abſolute or general evil exiſted in the ſyſtem of nature; but that even particular and relative evils were much leſs in reality, than in appearance; and that, on the whole, they were more than recompenſed by our particular and relative good. As an example of this, I appealed to Mr. Wolmar himſelf, and, penetrated with a ſenſe of the happineſs of his ſituation, I deſcribed it ſo juſtly, and in ſuch agreeable colours, that he ſeemed himſelf affected with the deſcription. "Such (ſays he, interrupting me) are the deluſive arguments of Eloiſa: ſhe always ſubſtitutes ſentiment in the place of reaſon, and argues ſo affectingly, that I cannot help embracing her at every reply: Was it not her philoſophical preceptor (added he, ſmiling) that taught her this manner of reaſoning?" Two months before, this piece of pleaſantry would have cruelly diſconcerted me; but my firſt embarraſſment was now over, and I joined in the laugh: nor did Eloiſa, though ſhe bluſhed a little, appear any more embarraſſed than myſelf. We continued the diſpute. Wolmar, not contending about the quantity of evil, contented himſelf with obſerving that, whether little or much, evil ſtill exiſted; and thence inferred the want either of power, wiſdom, or goodneſs in the firſt cauſe. I, on my part, ſtrove to deduce the origin of phyſical evil from the properties of matter, and of moral evil from the free agency of man. I advanced, that nothing was impoſſible to the Deity, except the

creation

creation of ſubſtances as perfect and exempt from evil as himſelf. We were in the heat of our diſpute when I perceived Eloiſa had left us. "Can you gueſs whither ſhe is gone? (ſaid her huſband) ſeeing me look around for her." "I ſuppoſe (ſaid I) to give ſome orders in her family."—"No (replied he) ſhe would not have left us at this time for that. Buſineſs of that kind is, I know not how, tranſacted without my ever ſeeing her interfere."—"Then ſhe is gone to the nurſery?"—"No; her children are not more at her heart than my converſion." "Well then (ſaid I) I know not what ſhe is gone about; but I am well aſſured ſhe is employed in ſome uſeful concern."—"Still leſs (ſaid he, coldly;) come, come along; you ſhall ſee if I gueſs right."

He then ſtepped ſoftly along the room, and I followed him in the ſame manner: when, coming to the door of Eloiſa's cloſet, and finding it ſhut, he threw it ſuddenly open. O! my lord! what a ſight did this preſent us! Eloiſa on her knees, her hands lifted up to heaven, and her face bathed in tears! She roſe up precipitately, wiping her eyes, hiding her face, and trying to eſcape us: never did I ſee ſo affecting a confuſion. Her huſband did not give her time to get away; but ran to her in a kind of tranſport: "Ah, my dear! (ſaid he, embracing her) even the fervency of your prayers betrays the weakneſs of your cauſe: what prevents their efficacy? If your deſires were heard, they would

would preſently be granted."—"I doubt not (ſaid ſhe, with a devout confidence) but they will be granted; how ſoon or late I leave to heaven. Could I obtain it at the expenſe of my life, I ſhould lay it down with pleaſure, and think the laſt the beſt employed of all my days."

Come, my lord, leave thoſe ſcenes of deſtruction you are now engaged in, and act a nobler part. Can a philoſopher prefer the honour of deſtroying mankind to the virtue of endeavouring to ſave them*?

LETTER CXLII.

TO LORD B——.

WHAT! my lord, after being abſent a whole campaign, muſt you take a journey to Paris? Have you then entirely forgot Clarens, and its inhabitants? Are we leſs dear to you than my Lord H—— ! or, are you more neceſſary to that friend than to thoſe who expect you here? You oblige us to oppoſe our wiſhes to your's, and make me in particular lament that I have not intereſt enough at the court of France to prevent your obtaining the paſſports you wait for. But, no matter; go, viſit your worthy countryman. In ſpite of you both,

* There is here a long letter wanting, from Lord B—— to Eloiſa. It is mentioned in the ſequel; but, for particular reaſons, I was obliged to ſuppreſs it.

both, we will be revenged of you for the preference given him; for, whatever pleaſure you may enjoy in his company, I know that, when you come to be with us, you will regret the time you ſtaid away.

On receiving your letter, I at firſt ſuſpected you were charged with ſome ſecret commiſſion. If peace were in view, where could be found a more worthy mediator?—But when do kings put their confidence in men of worth? Dare they liſten to truth? Do they know how to reſpect true merit? No, my dear Lord B——, you are not made for a miniſter of ſtate; and I think too well of you to imagine, if you had not been born a peer, you would ever have riſen to that dignity——Come, come, my friend, you will be better at Clarens than at court. What an agreeable winter ſhall we paſs together, if the hope of ſeeing you here does not deceive me! Our happineſs is every day preparing, by the arrival of one or other of thoſe privileged minds, who are ſo dear to each other, ſo worthy of each other's eſteem, and who ſeem only to wait for you, to be able to live without all the reſt of the world. On hearing what a lucky accident brought hither the Baron's adverſary, you foreſaw the conſequences of that rencounter; it has really fallen out as you foretold. That old litigant, though almoſt as obſtinate and inflexible as his opponent, could not reſiſt the aſcendant we got over him. After ſeeing and converſing with Eloiſa, he began to be aſhamed

aſhamed of contending with her father; and on leaving her, ſet out for Bern, in ſo favourable a diſpoſition, that we hear an accommodation is far advanced, and from the Baron's laſt letter expect his return home in a few days. This you will already have been told by Mr. Wolmar: but probably you do not yet know that Mrs. Orbe, having ſettled her affairs, arrived here on Thurſday laſt, and reſides entirely at the houſe of her friend. As I knew beforehand the day of her arrival, I ſet out to meet her, unknown to Mrs. Wolmar, whom ſhe had a mind to ſurpriſe: we met on this ſide Lutri, and returned together.

I think I never ſaw her ſo ſprightly and agreeable; but unequal, abſent, giving little attention to any thing, ſeldom replying; talking by fits and ſtarts; in a word, given up entirely to that reſtleſsneſs which is natural to us, when juſt on the point of obtaining what we have long ardently deſired. One would have thought every minute that ſhe was afraid of being obliged to return. Her journey, though ſo long deferred, was undertaken ſo precipitately, that it almoſt turned the heads of both miſtreſs and domeſticks. A whimſical diſorder appeared throughout the whole of her little baggage. If her woman imagined, as ſhe did every now and then, that ſhe had left ſomething behind, Clara as conſtantly aſſured her ſhe had put it into the ſeat of the coach; where, upon further enquiry, is was not to be found.

As ſhe was unwilling Eloiſa ſhould hear the rattling of her coach, ſhe got out in the avenue, before we came to the gate; and, ſcudding acroſs the court-yard like a ſylph, ran up ſtairs with ſo much precipitation that ſhe was obliged to ſtop and take breath on the firſt landing-place, before ſhe could get up the next flight. Mr. Wolmar came out to meet her, but ſhe was in too much hurry to ſpeak to him. On opening the door of Eloiſa's apartment, I ſaw her ſitting near the window, with the little Harriet on her knee. Clara had prepared for her a fine compliment, in her way; a compound of affection and pleaſantry; but, on ſetting her foot over the threſhold, compliment and pleaſantry were all forgotten; ſhe flew forward to embrace her friend with a tranſport impoſſible to be deſcribed, crying out, Ah! my dear, dear couſin! Harriet, ſeeing her mother, fled to meet her, and crying out *Mama*, *Mama*, ran with ſo much force againſt her, that the poor child fell backward on the floor. The effect of the ſudden appearance of Clara, the fall of Harriet, the joy, the apprehenſions, that ſeiſed upon Eloiſa at that inſtant, made her give a violent ſhriek, and faint away. Clara was going to lift up the child, when ſhe ſaw her friend turn pale, which made her heſitate whom to aſſiſt; till, ſeeing me take up Harriet, ſhe flew to the relief of Eloiſa; but, in endeavouring to recover her, ſunk down likewiſe in a ſwoon by the ſide of her friend.

The

The child, ſeeing them both without motion, made ſuch loud lamentations as ſoon brought the little French woman into the room; the one clung about her mother, the other ran to her miſtreſs. For my part, I was ſo ſtruck, that I ſtalked about the room, without knowing what I did, venting broken exclamations, and making involuntary motions to no purpoſe. Wolmar himſelf, the unſuſceptible Wolmar, ſeemed affected. But where is the heart of iron whom ſuch a ſcene of ſenſibility would not affect? Where is the unfortunate mortal from whom ſuch a ſcene of tenderneſs would not have extorted tears? Inſtead of running to Eloiſa, this fortunate huſband threw himſelf on a ſettee, to enjoy the delightful ſcene. "Be not afraid (ſays he, ſeeing our uneaſineſs.) In theſe accidents nature only is exhauſted for a moment, to recover itſelf with new vigour; they are never dangerous. Let me prevail on you not to interrupt the pleaſure I take in this tranſporting ſight, but partake it with me. How raviſhingly delightful muſt it be to you? I never taſted any thing like it, and am yet the moſt unhappy of all here."

You may judge, my lord, by the firſt moment of their meeting, the conſequences of the reunion of theſe charming friends. It has excited throughout the whole houſe a ſound of gladneſs, a tumultuous joy, that has not yet ſubſided. Eloiſa was in ſuch an agitation as I never

never ſaw her in before; it was impoſſible for her to think of any thing all that day, but to gaze on her new viſitor, and load her with freſh careſſes. No body even thought of the ſaloon of Apollo; there was no occaſion for thinking of it when every place gave equal pleaſure. We were hardly, even the next day, compoſed enough to think of making an entertainment on the occaſion. Had it not been for Wolmar, every thing would have gone wrong. In the mean time, every one was dreſſed in the beſt manner. No other care was admitted than what tended to amuſement. The entertainment was not grand, but extremely joyous; throughout the whole there reigned a pleaſing confuſion and diſorder, which were its greateſt embelliſhment.

The morning was ſpent in putting Mrs. Orbe in poſſeſſion of her employment of intendant or houſekeeper, and ſhe betrayed the ſame eagerneſs to enter into her office, as a child does after a new play-thing, at which we were highly diverted. In entering the ſaloon at dinner, both couſins were agreeably ſurpriſed to ſee on every ſide their names in cypher, artificially formed with flowers. Eloiſa gueſſed in an inſtant to whom ſhe was obliged for that piece of ingenuity, and embraced me in a tranſport of joy. Clara, contrary to former cuſtom, heſitated to follow her example, till Wolmar reprimanding her: ſhe bluſhed, and embraced me. Her ſweet confuſion, which I obſerved but too plainly, had

had an effect on me which I cannot deſcribe; but I could not feel myſelf in her arms without emotion.

After dinner, a fine collation was ſet out in the Gyneceum, or women's apartment; where for once Mr. Wolmar and I were admitted, and were entertained agreeably. In the evening all the houſe, now increaſed by three perſons, aſſembled to dance. Clara ſeemed ornamented by the hands of the Graces, never having appeared to ſo much advantage as on that day. She danced, ſhe chatted, ſhe laughed, ſhe gave orders, ſhe was capable of every thing. Having proteſted ſhe would tire me out, ſhe danced down five or ſix country-dances in a breath; and then reproached me for footing it with the gravity of a philoſopher. I, on the other hand, told her ſhe danced like a fairy; that ſhe was full as miſchievous, and that ſhe would not let me reſt night nor day. "You ſhall ſee to the contrary (ſays ſhe) here's that will ſet you to ſleep preſently:" with that ſhe ſtarted up, and led down another dance.

She was really indefatigable; but it was otherwiſe with Eloiſa: ſhe could hardly ſupport herſelf; her knees trembled as ſhe danced; ſhe was too much affected to be chearful. One might obſerve a tear of joy every now and then trickle from her eyes; ſhe regarded her couſin with a kind of delicious tranſport; took a pleaſure in conceiving herſelf the gueſt for whom the entertainment was made, and looked fondly

upon Clara, as the miſtreſs of the houſe who entertained her.

After ſupper, I played off the fire-works I had brought from China, which had a pretty effect. We ſat up great part of the night. At length it became time to break up: Mrs. Orbe was tired, or had danced enough to be ſo; and Eloiſa was deſirous ſhe ſhould not ſit up too late.

After this we became inſenſibly tranquil, and good order took place. Clara, giddy and inconſiderate as ſhe ſeems, knows how to check her ſallies, and put on an air of authority, when ſhe pleaſes. She has, beſides, great good ſenſe, an exquiſite diſcernment, the penetration of Wolmar, and the goodneſs of Eloiſa; and though extremely liberal, has a good deal of diſcretion in her generoſity; for, though left ſo young a widow, and charged with the care of a daughter, the fortunes of both increaſe in her hands; ſo that there is no reaſon to apprehend the houſe will, under her direction, be leſs prudently governed than before. In the mean time, Eloiſa has the ſatisfaction of devoting herſelf entirely to an occupation more agreeable to her taſte; that is, the education of her children: and I doubt not but Harriet will profit greatly by one of her mothers having relieved the other. I ſay her mothers, becauſe, by the manner in which they both behave to her, it is difficult to diſtinguiſh which is really ſo; ſo that ſome ſtrangers, who arrived here to day, are ſtill, or appear to be, in doubt about it. In fact, they

they both call her *Harriet*, or *my child*, indifferently. She calls the one her *mama*, and the other her *little mama:* ſhe has the ſame love for both, and pays them equal obedience. If the ladies are aſked whoſe child it is, each anſwers it is her's: if Harriet be queſtioned, ſhe ſays that ſhe has two mothers: ſo that it is no wonder people are puzzled. The moſt diſcerning, however, think her the child of Eloiſa; Harriet, whoſe father was of a fair complexion, being fair like her, and ſometimes reſembling her in features. A greater maternal tenderneſs appears alſo in the ſoft regards of Eloiſa than in the ſprightlier looks of Clara. The child puts on alſo a more reſpectful air, and is more reſerved in her behaviour before the former. She places herſelf involuntarily oftener on the ſide of Eloiſa, becauſe ſhe moſt frequently talks to her. It muſt be confeſſed all appearances are in favour of our *little mama*; and I perceive the deception is ſo agreeable to the two couſins, that it may be ſometimes perhaps intended.

In a fortnight, my lord, nothing will be wanting here but your preſence; and when you are arrived, I ſhall have a very bad opinion of that man who ſhall be tempted to ranſack the world for a virtue, or a pleaſure, which may not be found in this houſe.

LETTER CXLIII.

TO LORD B——.

FOR theſe three days paſt I have attempted every evening ſucceſſively to write to you; but found myſelf, through the fatigue of the day, too ſleepy to effect my purpoſe at night, and in the morning I am again called upon early to my employment. A pleaſing tranquillity, more intoxicating than wine, takes poſſeſſion of my ſenſes, and I cannot without regret bear a moment's avocation from the new and agreeable amuſements I find here.

I cannot, indeed, conceive that any place would be diſagreeable to me in ſuch company; but do you know why Clarens in itſelf is agreeable? It is, that here I find myſelf actually in the country, which I could hardly ever ſay before. The inhabitants of cities know not how to enjoy the country; they know not what it is to be there; and, even when they are there, know not what to do with themſelves. They are ignorant of all ruſtick buſineſs and amuſements; they deſpiſe them; they ſeem at home as if they were in a foreign country, and I am not at all ſurpriſed that they are diſpleaſed with it. Among the country people we ſhould live as they do, or not aſſociate with them at all.

The Pariſians, who imagine they go into the country, miſtake the thing; they carry Paris

Paris along with them. They are attended with their ſingers, their wits, their authours, and their paraſites. Cards, muſick, and plays engroſs all their attention*; their tables are ſpread in the ſame manner as at Paris; they ſit down to their meals at the ſame hours; are ſerved with the ſame diſhes, and in the ſame pomp: in a word, they do juſt the ſame things in the country as they did in town, where, for that reaſon, it had been better they had ſtayed; for however opulent they are, or careful to omit nothing they are accuſtomed to, they always find ſomething wanting, and perceive the impoſſibility of carrying Paris altogether along with them. Thus, that variety they are ſo fond of eludes their ſearch; they are acquainted only with one manner of living, and are therefore a continual burthen to themſelves. To me every rural employment affords ſomething agreeable; nor is there any ſo painful and laborious as to excite our compaſſion for the labourer. As the object of both publick and private utility, huſbandry is peculiarly intereſting; and, as it was the firſt employment of man in his ſtate of innocence, it fills the mind with the moſt pleaſing ſenſations, and affects us with the

* Hunting, indeed, might be added. But this exerciſe is now made ſo commodious, that there is not half the fatigue or pleaſure in it there uſed to be. But I ſhall not here treat of this ſubject, which would furniſh too much matter to be inſerted in a note: I may take occaſion, perhaps, to *ſpeak of it elſewhere.*

agreeable ideas of the golden age. The imagination cannot help being warmed by the proſpects of ſeed-time and harveſt: if we look around us, and ſee the fields covered with hay-makers, and with flocks of ſheep, ſcattered at a diſtance, one is ſenſibly affected with a pleaſure ariſing one knows not how. The voice of nature thus ſometimes ſoftens our ſavage hearts, and though its dictates are too often fruitleſs, it is ſo agreeable that we never hear it without pleaſure.

I muſt confeſs, that the miſery which appears on the face of ſome countries, where the taxes devour the produce of the earth, the eager avarice of a greedy collector, the inflexible rigour of an inhuman maſter, take away much of the beauty of the proſpect. To ſee the poor jaded cattle ready to expire under the whip; to ſee the unhappy peaſants themſelves emaciated with faſting, clothed in rags, groaning with fatigue, and hardly ſecured from the inclemencies of the weather by their wretched huts: theſe are deplorable ſights, and it makes one almoſt bluſh to be a man, when one thinks how the very vitals of ſuch poor objects are drained, to ſatisfy their cruel maſters. But what pleaſure is it, on the other hand, to ſee the prudent and humane proprietors, in milder governments, make the cultivation of their lands the inſtrument of their benevolence, their recreation, their pleaſures! to ſee them with open hands diſtribute the bounties of providence! to ſee their ſervants, their cattle, and every creature about

about them, fatten on the abundance that flows from their barns, their cellars, and granaries! to ſee them ſurrounded with peace and plenty, and make, of the employment that enriches them, a continual entertainment! How is it poſſible for one to be inattentive to the agreeable illuſions which ſuch objects preſent? We forget the age we live in, and the vices of our contemporaries, and are tranſported in imagination to the time of the patriarchs; we are deſirous to ſet one's own hands to work; to join in the ruſtick employment, and partake of the happineſs annexed to it. Oh! how delightful were the days of love and innocence, when the women were affectionate and modeſt, the men ſimple and content! Such were the days when a lover did not regret fourteen years of ſervitude to obtain his miſtreſs. Fair daughter of Laban! keeper of thy father's flocks, how amiable muſt thou have been! how irreſiſtible thy charms! No, never doth beauty exert its power ſo much as when in the midſt of rural ſcenes and ruſtick ſimplicity. Here is the real ſeat of its empire; here ſhe ſits on her throne, ſurrounded by the graces; adorned by whoſe hands, ſhe captivates all beholders. Excuſe this rhapſody, my lord; I return now to my ſubject.

For this month paſt the autumnal heats have been preparing a favourable vintage, which the froſt has already induced us to begin*; the

* The vintage is very late in this country; becauſe the principal crop is of white wines; to which the froſt is of ſervice.

parched leaves falling off the vines, and expoſing to view the cluſtered grapes, whoſe juicy ripeneſs invites the hands of the gatherers. Vines loaded with this ſalutary fruit, which heaven beſtows on the unfortunate as a cure for all their woes; the ſound of the caſks, tubs, and tons, which they are hooping on every ſide; the ſongs of the gatherers, with which the vintage re-echoes; and the continual trotting backwards and forwards of thoſe who carry the grapes to the preſs; the harſh ſound of the ruſtick inſtruments that animate the people to work; the agreeable and affecting picture of a general good humour, which ſeems to be extended at that time over the face of the whole earth; add to theſe the fog, which the ſun exhales in a morning, and draws up like the curtain of a theatre, to diſplay ſo delightful a ſcene; all conſpire to give it the air of an entertainment; and that an entertainment which is the more pleaſing on reflexion that it is the only one in which mankind have art enough to join utility with delight.

Mr. Wolmar, who has one of the beſt vineyards in the country, has made all the neceſſary preparations for his vintage. His backs, his wine-preſs, his cellar, his caſks, are all ready for that delicious liquor for which they are deſigned. Mrs. Wolmar herſelf takes charge of the crop; the choice of the labourers, and the order and diſtribution of the ſeveral parts of the work falling to her ſhare. Mrs. Orbe takes care

of

of all entertainments, and of the payment of the day-labourers, agreeably to the police eſtabliſhed here, the laws of which are never infringed or broken. As to my part, I am ſet to inſpect the preſs, and enforce the directions of Eloiſa, who cannot bear the ſteam of the backs; and Clara did not fail to recommend me to this employ, as it is ſo well adapted, ſhe ſays, to a toper. Thus, every one having an allotted taſk, we are all up early in the morning, and are aſſembled to go to the vineyard. Mrs. Orbe, who never thinks herſelf ſufficiently employed, undertakes further to obſerve and rate thoſe who are idle; in doing which I can ſafely ſay, with reſpect to me at leaſt, that ſhe acquits herſelf with a malicious aſſiduity. As to the old Baron, while we are all employed, he walks out with his gun, and comes every now and then, to take me from my work, to go with him a thruſh-ſhooting; and I am taxed by my companions which being ſecretly engaged to him. So that by degrees I loſe my old name of philoſopher and get that of an idler; appellations which in reality are not very different. You ſee, by what I have told you of the Baron, that we are quite reconciled, and that Wolmar has reaſon to be content with his ſecond experiment*. Shall I hate the father of my friend!

* This will be better underſtood by the following extract of a letter from Eloiſa, not inſerted in this collection: "This (ſays Mr. Wolmar, taking me aſide) is the ſecond proof I intended to put him to, if he had not paid

No; were I his ſon, I could not reſpect him more than I do. In fact, I know not any man more ſincere, more open, more generous, or more honourable in every reſpect than this old gentleman. But the extravagance of his notions and prejudices is odd enough. Since he is certain I cannot be united to his family, he is extremely civil; and, provided I be not his ſon-in-law, he will readily give up every thing, and allow me a ſuperiority to himſelf. The only thing I cannot forgive him, is, that when we are alone he will ſometimes rally the pretended philoſopher on his former lectures. His pleaſantry on this head hurts me, and I am always vexed at it; but he turns my reſentment into ridicule, and ſays, "Come along, let us go bring down a thruſh or two; we have carried this argument far enough." And then he calls out, as we go out of doors; "Here, Clara, Clara! provide a good ſupper for your maſter; I am going to get him an appetite." Notwithſtanding his age, alſo, I can aſſure

paid great reſpect to your father, I ſhould have miſtruſted him."—"But (ſaid I) how ſhall we reconcile that reſpect to the antipathy that ſubſiſts between them?"—"It ſubſiſts no longer (replied he.) Your father's prejudices have done St. Preux all the harm they could; he has no further reaſon to fear them; he is not angry at your father, but pities him. The Baron, on his ſide, is no longer jealous of St. Preux; he has a good heart; is ſenſible he has injured him, and is ſorry for it. I ſee they will do very well together, and will for the future ſee each other with pleaſure. From this moment, therefore, I ſhall *put an entire confidence* in him."

aſſure you he bruſhes among the vines with his gun, with as much activity as myſelf, and is incomparably a better markſman. I have ſome ſatisfaction, however, in that he dares not drop a word before his daughter, the little ſcholar preſcribing no leſs to her father than to her preceptor. But to return to our vintage.

It is now a week ſince we have been employed in this agreeable occupation, yet we have hardly done half our work. Beſides the wines intended for ſale and for common uſe, which are only ſimply though carefully made, our benevolent fairy make others of a more exquiſite flavour for us drinkers; I myſelf aſſiſting in the magical operations.

We make wines of all countries from the grapes of one vineyard: to make one ſort, ſhe orders the ſtalks of the bunches to be twiſted when the grape is ripe, and lets them dry by the heat of the ſun upon the ſtock; for another, ſhe has the grapes picked and ſtoned before they are put into the preſs; again, for a third ſort, ſhe has the red grapes gathered before ſun-riſing, and carefully conveyed to the preſs, freſh with their bloom, and covered with the morning dew, to make white wine. She makes a ſweet wine, by putting into the caſks *muſt*, reduced to a ſyrup by evaporation; a dry wine, by checking its fermentation; a bitter cordial, by ſteeping wormwood*; and a muſcadel wine, with the

* In Switzerland they drink a great deal of bitter wine; and in general, as the herbs of the Alps have more virtue than

help of ſimples. All theſe different wines have their peculiar methods of preparation; every one of which is ſimple and wholeſome. And thus an induſtrious œconomy makes up for a diverſity of ſoils, and unites twenty climates in one. You cannot conceive with what aſſiduity, with what alacrity, all our buſineſs is done. We ſing and laugh all day long, without the leaſt interruption to our work. We live all together in the greateſt familiarity; are all treated on a footing, and yet no one forgets himſelf. The ladies put on none of their fine airs, the country women are modeſt, the men droll, but never rude. Thoſe are the moſt careſſed who ſing the beſt ſongs, tell the beſt ſtories, or hit off the beſt joke. Our good underſtanding even gives riſe to pleaſant bickerings between us, and our mutual raillery is exerted only to ſhow how far we can bear with good temper each other's ſeverity. There is no returning home to play the *gentlefolks*; we ſtay all the day long in the vineyard; Eloiſa having cauſed a lodge to be built there, whither we retreat to warm ourſelves when cold, or to ſhelter us when it rains. We dine with the peaſants, and at their hour, as well as work with them. We eat their ſoup, a little coarſe indeed, but very good, and ſeaſoned with excellent herbs. We laugh not at their downright behaviour and ruſtick compliments; but, in order to free them from reſtraint,

than the plants of other countries, they make great uſe *of infuſions.*

reſtraint, give into their own ways, without affectation. This complaiſance on our ſide alſo is not loſt upon them; they are ſenſible of it; and ſeeing that we are ſo ready to go out of our way for them, they are more willing to go on in their own for us. At dinner the children are brought from the houſe, and paſs the reſt of the day in the vineyard. How rejoiced are the peaſants to ſee them! then, taking them up in their ſturdy arms, they bleſs them, and wiſh that heaven may prolong their days, to reſemble their parents, and make them in like manner a bleſſing to their country. When I think that the moſt of theſe men have bor'n arms, and underſtand the uſe of the ſword and muſket as well as the management of the hoe and pruning-knife, in ſeeing Eloiſa ſo loved and reſpected by them, and herſelf and children received with ſuch affecting acclamations, I cannot help calling to mind the virtuous and illuſtrious Agrippina ſhowing her ſon to the troops of Germanicus. Incomparable Eloiſa! who exerciſes in the ſimplicity of private life the deſpotick power of wiſdom and beneficence; your perſon a dear and ſacred truſt depoſited in the hands of your countrymen, every one of whom would defend and protect you at the hazard of his own life; it is your's to live more ſecurely, more honourably, in the midſt of a whole people who love you, than monarchs ſurrounded with guards.

In the evening, we all return home chearfully together; the work-people being lodged

and

and boarded with us all the time of the vintage; and even on Sundays, after the evening ſervice, we aſſemble and dance together till ſupper-time. On the other days of the week, alſo, we remain all together, after we are returned home, except the Baron, who, eating no ſuppers, goes to bed early, and Eloiſa, who with her children ſtays with him till his bed-time. Thus, from the time we take upon ourſelves the buſineſs of the vintage, till we quit it, we never once mix the city and country life together. Theſe Saturnalia are much more agreeable and diſcreet than thoſe of the Romans. The contraſt they effected was too prepoſterous to improve either the maſter or the ſlave; but the peaceful equality which prevails here re-eſtabliſhes the order of nature, is productive of inſtruction to ſome, of conſolation to others, and of a friendly connexion between all*. Our aſſembly-room

* If hence ariſes a kind of equality not leſs agreeable to thoſe who deſcend than to thoſe who are elevated, does it not follow, that all conditions of life are in themſelves almoſt indifferent, ſince people are not always confined to them? Beggars are unhappy, becauſe they are always beggars; kings are miſerable, becauſe they are always kings. People in a middling condition are the happieſt, becauſe they can eaſier vary their circumſtances, to enjoy the pleaſures of thoſe above or thoſe below them. They are alſo more intelligent, becauſe they have an opportunity of knowing more of the prejudices of mankind, and of comparing them with each other. This ſeems to me the principal reaſon why, generally ſpeaking, people of a middling ſtation in life are the moſt happy, and are *perſons* of the beſt ſenſe.

room is an old hall, with a great chimney, and a good fire in it. On the mantle-piece are lighted up three lamps, made by Mr. Wolmar's orders of tin, juſt to catch the ſmoak, and reflect the light. To prevent giving riſe to envy, every thing is carefully avoided that might in the eyes of theſe poor people appear more coſtly than what they meet with at home; no other mark of opulence being diſplayed than the choice of the beſt of common things, and a little more profuſion in their diſtribution. Supper is ſerved upon two long tables; where the pomp and luxury of entertainments is amply ſupplied by good humour and plenty. Every one ſits down to table, maſter, labourers, and ſervants; every one without diſtinction gets up to help himſelf, without exception or preference; the whole repaſt ending in gratitude and feſtivity. All drink at their diſcretion, ſubject to no other rules than thoſe of decency and ſobriety. The preſence of ſuperiors, whom they ſo truely reſpect, keeps the work-people within bounds; yet lays no reſtraint on their eaſe and chearfulneſs. And ſhould any one happen to forget himſelf, and give offenſe, the company is not diſturbed by reprimands, the offender being diſmiſſed the next day, without further notice.

Thus do I take advantage of the pleaſures of the country and the ſeaſon. I reſume the freedom of living after the manner of the country, and to drink pure wine pretty often; but I drink none that is not poured out by the hands of one

or other of the two couſins; who take upon them to meaſure my thirſt by the ſtrength of my head, and to manage my reaſon as they think proper; nor does any one know better how to manage it, or has like them the art to give or take it away from me at pleaſure. When the fatigue of the day, or the length and feſtivity of the repaſt, add to the ſtrength of the liquor, I indulge myſelf without reſtraint in the ſallies it inſpires. They are no longer ſuch as I need ſuppreſs, even in the preſence of the ſagacious Wolmar. I am no longer afraid his penetrating eye ſhould ſee into the bottom of my heart; and, when a tender idea ariſes in my memory, one look from Clara diſſipates it; one look of Eloiſa makes me bluſh for my weakneſs.

After ſupper, we ſit up an hour or two to ſtrip hemp; every one ſinging a ſong in turn. Sometimes the women ſing altogether, or one ſings alone, and the reſt join in chorus to the burthen of the ſong. Moſt of their ſongs are old tales, ſet to no very agreeable tunes. There is, notwithſtanding, ſomething antique and affecting, which on the whole is very pleaſing. The words are generally very ſimple, unaffected, and often very ſorrowful: they are, nevertheleſs, entertaining. Clara cannot forbear ſmiling, Eloiſa bluſhing, and myſelf from giving a ſigh, when the ſame turns and expreſſions are repeated in theſe ſongs which have heretofore been made uſe of between us. On thoſe occaſions, the rememberance of times paſt ruſhes upon

upon my mind: I am ſeiſed with a trembling, an inſupportable burthen oppreſſes my heart, and leaves ſo deep an impreſſion of ſorrow, that I can hardly ſhake it off. I find, nevertheleſs, in theſe evenings a ſort of pleaſure which I cannot deſcribe, and which is nevertheleſs very great.

The union of people of different conditions, the ſimplicity of their occupation, the idea of eaſe, concord, and tranquillity, the peaceful ſenſation it awakes in the ſoul; theſe altogether have ſomething affecting that diſpoſes every one to make choice of the moſt intereſting ſongs. The concert of female voices is alſo not without its charms. For my part, I am convinced, that of all kinds of harmony there is none ſo agreeable as ſinging in uniſon; and that we only require a variety of concords, becauſe our taſte is depraved. Does not harmony in fact exiſt in every ſingle note? what then can we add to it, without changing the proportions which nature has eſtabliſhed in the relation of harmonious ſounds.

Nature has done every thing in the beſt manner; but we would do better, and ſo ſpoil all.

There is as great an emulation among us about the work of the evening, as about that of the day; and a piece of roguery I was guilty of yeſterday brought me into a little diſgrace. As I am not the moſt expert at hemp-peeling, and am ſometimes abſent in thought, I began to be tired with always being pointed at for

doing

doing the leaſt work. I ſhovelled the ſtalks with my feet therefore from my next neighbours, to enlarge my own heap; but that inexorable Mrs. Orbe, perceiving it, made a ſign to Eloiſa, who, detecting me in the fact, reprimanded me ſeverely. "Come, come (ſays ſhe aloud) I'll have no injuſtice done here, though in jeſt; it is thus people accuſtom themſelves to cheating, and prove rogues in good earneſt, and then, what is worſe, make a jeſt of it"

In this manner we paſs our evenings. When it is near bed-time, Mrs Wolmar ſtands up, and ſays, "Come, now let us to our fire-works." On which every one takes up his bundle of hemp-ſtalks, the honourable proofs of his labour, which are carried in triumph into the middle of the court-yard, and there laid as trophies in a heap, and ſet on fire. Every one, however, has not indiſcriminately this honour; but thoſe to whom Eloiſa adjudges it, by giving the torch to him or her who has done moſt work that evening; and when this happens to be herſelf, ſhe does it with her own hands, without more to do. This ceremony is accompanied with acclamations and clapping of hands. The ſtalks ſoon burn up in a blaze, which aſcends to the clouds; a real bonfire, about which we laugh and ſing, till it is out. After this, the whole company are ſerved with liquor, and every one drinks to the health of the conqueror, and goes to bed, content with a day paſſed in labour, chearfulneſs, and innocence, which he would willingly

willingly begin again the next day, the next after that, and every day, to the laſt of his life.

LETTER CXLIV.

TO MR. WOLMAR.

ENJOY, my dear Wolmar, the fruits of your labour. Receive the acknowledgements of a heart which you have taken ſo much pains to render worthy of being offered to your acceptance. Never did any man undertake ſo arduous a taſk; never did any one attempt what you have executed, nor did ever a ſuſceptible and grateful mind feel more than that with which you have inſpired me. Mine had loſt its force, its vigour, its very being; but you have reſtored them all: I was dead to virtue, to happineſs, and owe to you that moral life, to which you have raiſed me. O my benefactor! my father! in giving myſelf up entirely to you, I can only offer, as to the Deity, the gifts I have received at your hands.

Muſt I confeſs to you my weakneſs and my fears? Hitherto I have always diſtruſted myſelf. It is not a week ago that I bluſhed for the weakneſs of my heart, and thought all our pains had been loſt. That cruel and diſcouraging moment, however, thanks to heaven and you, is paſt, never to return. I do not think myſelf cured, only becauſe you tell me ſo, but becauſe I feel it: I ſtand no longer in need of your anſwering

anſwering for me, who have put me in a ſtate to anſwer for myſelf. It was neceſſary for me to be abſent from you and Eloiſa, to know what I ſhould be without your ſupport. It is at a diſtance from her abode that I learn not to be afraid to approach her.

As I write the particulars of our journey to Mrs. Orbe, I ſhall not repeat them here: I am not unwilling you ſhould know my foibles; but I have not the courage to tell you of them. It is, my dear Wolmar, my laſt fault. I feel myſelf ſo far already from being liable to commit the like again that I cannot think of it without diſdain; and yet it is ſo little a while ſince, that I cannot acknowledge it without ſhame. You who can ſo readily forgive my errours will doubtleſs forgive the ſhame which attends my repentance.

Nothing is now wanting to complete my happineſs. My Lord B—— has told me all. Shall I then, my dear friend, be devoted entirely to you? Shall I educate your children? Shall the eldeſt of the three be preceptor to the reſt? With what ardour have I not deſired it? The hope of being thought worthy of ſuch employment has redoubled my aſſiduity to ſecond your paternal care and inſtructions.

How often have I not expreſſed my earneſtneſs, in this particular, to Eloiſa! with what pleaſure have I not interpreted the diſcourſe of both of you in my favour! But although ſhe was convinced of my zeal for your ſervice, and

ſeemed

ſeemed to approve of its object, ſhe never entered ſo explicitly into my deſigns as to encourage me to ſpeak more openly. I was ſenſible I ought rather to merit that honour than to aſk for it. I expected of you and her that proof of your confidence and eſteem. I have not been deceived in my expectation, nor ſhall you, my dear friends, believe me, be deceived in your's.

You know that, in the courſe of our converſation on the education of your children, I have thrown together upon paper ſome of thoſe ſentiments which ſuch converſation furniſhed me with, and which you approved. Since my departure, ſome new reflexions have ſuggeſted themſelves on the ſame ſubject: I have reduced the whole into a kind of a ſyſtem, which, when I have properly digeſted, I ſhall communicate to you for your examination. I do not think, however, I ſhall be able to make it fit for your inſpection till after our arrival at Rome. My ſyſtem is a ſupplement to that of Eloiſa; or rather, it is nothing more than a connexion and illuſtration of her's; for it conſiſts only in rules to prevent the natural diſpoſition from being ſpoiled, in ſubjecting it to the laws and cuſtoms of ſociety.

I have recovered my reaſon by your care: my heart is again ſound and at liberty: I ſee myſelf beloved by all whoſe love I could wiſh to poſſeſs: futurity preſents me with an agreeable proſpect. With all this my ſituation ſhould ſurely be delightful; but it is decreed my ſoul ſhall never

never enjoy tranquillity. As the end of our journey approaches, I ſee the criſis of the fate of my illuſtrious friend: it is I, if I may ſo ſay, who ought to decide it. Cannot I at leaſt do that once for him which he has ſo often done for me? Cannot I nobly diſcharge the greateſt and moſt important duty of my life? My dear Wolmar, I retain all your leſſons in my heart; but, to make them uſeful, why do not I poſſeſs your ſagacity? Ah! could I but one day ſee Lord B—— happy! Could I, agreeably to your projects, ſee us but all aſſembled together never to part again! could I entertain a wiſh for any thing on earth beſides! Yes, one, the accompliſhment of which depends not on you, nor me, nor on any other perſon in the world; but on him who has a reward in ſtore for the virtues of Eloiſa, and keeps a ſecret regiſter of your good actions.

LETTER CXLV.

TO MRS. ORBE.

WHERE are you, my charming couſin? Oh! where is the amiable confident of that feeble heart, which is, on ſo many accounts, your's; and which you have ſo often comforted in deſpair? Come, and let me lay open to you the confeſſion of its laſt errour. Is it not always your province to purify it by confeſſion and pardon? Is there a fault which it can

reproach

reproach itſelf with after it hath confeſſed it to you? No, it is no longer the ſame; and its regeneration is owing to you: you have given me a new heart, which now offers you its firſt ſervices: but I ſhall not think myſelf quite free from that which I quit, till I have depoſited it in your hands.

The moment of my life in which I had moſt reaſon to be contented with myſelf was that in which I left you. Recovered of my errours, I looked upon that inſtant as the tardy æra of my return to my duty. I began it, therefore, by paying off part of that immenſe debt I owed to friendſhip, in leaving ſo delightful an abode to follow a benefactor, a philoſopher, who, pretending to ſtand in need of my ſervices, put the ſucceſs of his to the proof. The more diſagreeable my departure, the more I piqued myſelf on making ſo great a ſacrifice, After having ſpent half my time in nouriſhing an unhappy paſſion, I conſecrated the other half to juſtify it, and to render, by my virtues, a more worthy homage to her who ſo long received that of my heart. I proudly contemplated the firſt of my days in which I had neither given occaſion for my own bluſhes, for your's, for her's, nor for thoſe of any one who was dear to me. My Lord B——, being apprehenſive of a ſorrowful parting, was for our ſetting out early, without taking a formal leave; but though hardly any body was ſtirring in the houſe, we could not elude your friendly vigilance. Your door half open, and

your

your woman on the watch; your coming out to meet us, and our going in and finding a table ſet out, and tea made ready, all theſe circumſtances brought to my mind thoſe of former times; and, comparing my preſent departure with that which came to my remembrance, I found myſelf ſo very differently diſpoſed to what I was on the former occaſion, that I rejoiced to think Lord B—— was a witneſs of that difference, and hoped to make him forget at Milan the ſhameful ſcene of Beſançon. I never found myſelf ſo reſolute before; I prided myſelf in diſplaying my temper before you; behaving with more fortitude than you have ever ſeen in me; and gloried, in parting, to think I had appeared before you ſuch as I was going ever afterwards to be. This idea added to my courage; I ſupported my ſpirits by your eſteem; and perhaps ſhould have left you without weeping, if a tear, trickling down your cheek, had not drawn a ſympathetick drop from my eyes.

I left you with a heart fully ſenſible of its obligations, and particularly penetrated with ſuch as your friendſhip has laid me under; reſolved to employ the reſt of my life in deſerving them. My Lord B——, taking me to taſk for my paſt follies, laid before me no very agreeable picture; and I knew by the juſt ſeverity with which he cenſured my foibles, that he was little afraid of imitating them. He pretended, nevertheleſs, to be apprehenſive of it; and ſpoke to me with ſome uneaſineſs of his journey to Rome, and the unworthy

unworthy attachments, which, in ſpite of himſelf, led him thither: but I ſaw plainly that he exaggerated his own dangers, to engage my attention the more to him, and draw it off from thoſe to which I was myſelf expoſed. Juſt as we got into Villeneuve, one of our ſervants, who was but badly mounted, was thrown off his horſe, and got a ſmall contuſion on his head: on which his maſter had him bled, and determined to ſtay there that night. We accordingly dined early, and afterwards took horſes, and went to Bex, to ſee the ſalt manufactory; where, at my lord's deſire, who had ſome particular reaſon for requeſting it, I took a ſketch of the building and works, ſo that we did not return to Villeneuve till night. After ſupper we chatted a good while over our punch, and went to bed pretty late. It was in this converſation he informed me of the charge intended to be committed to my care, and what meaſures had been taken to bring it about. You may judge of the effect this piece of information had upon me; a converſation of this nature did not incline me to ſleep. It was at length, however, time to retire.

As I entered the chamber appointed for me, I immediately recollected it to be the ſame in which I had formerly ſlept, on my journey to Sion. The view of it made an impreſſion on me, which would be very difficult for me to deſcribe. I was ſtruck with ſuch lively ideas of what I then was, that I imagined myſelf again

in the ſame ſituation, though ten years of my life had paſſed away in the interval, and all my troubles had been forgotten. But, alas! that reflexion was but of a ſhort duration, and the next moment oppreſſed me with the weight of my former afflictions. How mortifying were the recollections that ſucceeded to my firſt reverie! what dreadful compariſons ſuggeſted themſelves to my mind! Ye pleaſures of early youth; ye exquiſite delights of a firſt paſſion, oh! why, ſaid I, doth your rememberance wound a heart already too much oppreſſed with griefs? Thrice happy were thoſe days! days now no more, in which I loved and was beloved again; in which I gave myſelf up in peaceful innocence to the tranſports of a mutual paſſion; in which I drank its intoxicating draughts, and all my faculties were loſt in the rapture, the extacy, the delirium of love. On the rocks of Meillerie, in the midſt of froſt and ſnow, with the frightful precipices before my eyes, was there a being in the creation ſo happy as I? and yet I then wept! I then thought myſelf unfortunate! ſorrow even then ventured to approach my heart! what, therefore, ſhould I be now, when I have poſſeſſed all that my ſoul held dear, and loſt it for ever? I deſerve my misfortune, for having been ſo little ſenſible of my happineſs!——did I weep then? —didſt thou weep? unfortunate wretch! thou ſhalt weep no more—thou haſt no right to weep——Why is ſhe not dead? ſaid I, in a tranſport of rage; yes, I ſhould then be leſs unhappy:

unhappy: I could then indulge myſelf in my griefs; I ſhould embrace her cold tomb with pleaſure: my affliction ſhould be worthy of her: I might then ſay, She hears my cries, ſhe ſees my tears, ſhe is moved by my groans, ſhe approves and accepts of my homage.——I ſhould then, at leaſt, have cheriſhed the hope of being united to her again.——But ſhe lives, and is happy in the poſſeſſion of another.——She lives, and her life is my death; her happineſs is my torment; and heaven, having taken her from me, deprives me even of the mournful pleaſure of regretting her loſs——ſhe lives, but not for me: ſhe lives for my deſpair, who am an hundred times farther from her than if ſhe were no more.

I went to bed under theſe tormenting reflexions; they accompanied me in my ſleep, and diſturbed it with terrible apprehenſions. The moſt poignant afflictions, ſorrow, and death compoſed my dreams; and all the evils I ever felt repreſented themſelves to my imagination in a thouſand new forms, to torment me over again. One viſion in particular, and that the moſt cruel of all, ſtill purſued me; and though the confuſed apparitions of various phantoms ſeveral times appeared and vaniſhed, they all ended in the following:

Methought I ſaw the departed mother of your friend on her death-bed, and her daughter on her knees before her, bathed in tears, kiſſing her hands, and receiving her laſt breath. This

ſcene, which you once deſcribed to me, and which will never be effaced from my memory, was repreſented in ſtriking colours before me. "O my dear mother (ſaid Eloiſa, in accents that chilled my very ſoul) ſhe who is indebted to you for her life deprives you of your's! Alas! take back what you gave me, for without you it will be only a life of ſorrow."—"My child (anſwered her languiſhing mother) God is juſt, and his will muſt be obeyed—you will be a mother in your turn, and"—ſhe could ſay no more.——On this methought I went forward, to look upon her; but ſhe was vaniſhed, and Eloiſa lay in her place; I ſaw her plainly, and perfectly knew her, though her face was covered with a veil. I gave a ſhriek, and ran to take off the veil; but, methought, after many attempts to lay hold of it, I could not reach it, but tormented myſelf with vain endeavours to graſp what, though it covered her face, appeared to me impalpable. Upon which, methought ſhe addreſſed me in a faint voice, and ſaid, "Friend, be compoſed, the aweful veil that is ſpread over me is too ſacred to be removed." At theſe words I ſtruggled, made a new effort, and awoke; when I found myſelf in my bed, haraſſed with fright and fatigue, my face covered with big drops of ſweat, and drowned in tears.

My fears being a little diſſipated, I went to ſleep again; again the ſame dream put me into the ſame agitations: I awoke again, and went to ſleep the third time, when the ſame mournful ſcene ſtill preſented itſelf, the ſame appearance of

of death, and always the ſame impenetrable veil, eluding my graſp, and hiding from me the dying object which it covered.

On waking from this laſt dream, my terrour was ſo great, that I could not overcome it, though quite awake. I threw myſelf out of bed, without well knowing what I did, and wandered up and down my chamber, like a child in the dark, imagining myſelf beſet with phantoms, and ſtill fancying in my ears the ſound of that voice, whoſe plaintive notes I never heard without emotion. The dawn of day beginning to caſt ſome light upon the objects in my chamber, ſerved only to transform them, agreeably to my troubled imagination. My fright increaſed, and at length entirely deprived me of reaſon. Having with ſome difficulty found the door, I ran out of my room, bolted into that of Lord B——, and, drawing open his curtains, threw myſelf down upon his bed, almoſt breathleſs, crying out, "She is gone—ſhe is gone—I ſhall never ſee her more."—His lordſhip ſtarted out of his ſleep, and flew to his ſword, imagining himſelf attacked by robbers. But he preſently perceived who it was; and I ſoon after recollected myſelf: this being the ſecond time of my life that I had appeared before him in ſuch confuſion.

He made me ſit down and compoſe myſelf; and as ſoon as he had learned the cauſe of my fright, endeavoured to turn it into ridicule; but, ſeeing me too deeply affected with it, and that the

impreſſion it had made was not to be eaſily effaced, he changed his tone. "For ſhame (ſays he, with an air of ſeverity) you neither deſerve my friendſhip nor eſteem; had I taken a quarter of the pains with one of my footmen which I have done with you, I had made a man of him: but you are fit for nothing."—"It is indeed, my lord (anſwered I) too true. I had nothing good in me but what came from her, whom now I ſhall ſee no more; and am, therefore, good for nothing." At this he ſmiled, and embraced me. "Come, come (ſays he) endeavour to compoſe yourſelf; to-morrow you will be a reaſonable creature." He then changed the converſation, and propoſed to ſet out. The horſes were accordingly ordered to be put to. In getting into the chaiſe, my lord whiſpered ſomething to the poſtillion, who immediately drove off.

We travelled for ſome time without ſpeaking. I was ſo taken up with my laſt night's dream, that I heard and ſaw nothing; not even obſerving that the lake, which the day before was on my right hand, was now on my left. The rattling of the chaiſe upon the pavement, however, at length awoke me out of my lethargy; I looked up, and to my great ſurpriſe found we were returned to Clarens. About a furlong from the gate, my lord ordered us to be ſet down; and taking me aſide, "You ſee my deſign (ſaid he;) it has no need of further explanation: go, thou viſionary mortal (continued he, preſſing my hand between his) go, and ſee her again.

Happy

Happy in expoſing your follies only to your friends, make haſte, and I will wait for you here; but, be ſure you do not return till you have removed that fatal veil which is woven in your brain."

What could I ſay? I left him without making any anſwer, and trembling as I advanced, ſlowly approached the houſe. What a part, ſaid I to myſelf, am I going to act here? how dare I ſhow myſelf? what pretext have I for this unexpected return? with what face can I plead my ridiculous terrours, and ſupport the contemptuous looks of the generous Wolmar? In ſhort, the nearer I drew to the houſe, the more childiſh my fears ſeemed to me, and the more contemptible my extravagant behaviour: my mind, however, ſtill miſgave me, and I went on, though every ſtep more ſlowly, till I came juſt to the court-yard, when I heard the door of the Elyſium juſt open and ſhut again. Seeing no body come out, I made a tour round the aviary, keeping as cloſe to it as poſſible; I then liſtened, and could hear you converſing together; but, though I could not diſtinguiſh a word you ſaid, I thought I perceived ſomething in the ſound of your voice ſo languiſhing and tender, that I could not hear it without emotion; and in Eloiſa's a ſweet and affectionate accent, not only ſuch as is uſual to her, but ſo mild and peaceful as to convince me all was well.

This reſtored me to my ſenſes at once, and woke me in good earneſt from my dream. I

perceived myſelf immediately ſo altered, that I laughed at my ridiculous fears; and while I reflected that only a hedge and a few ſhrubs prevented me from ſeeing her alive and in good health, whom I imagined I ſhould never ſee again, I renounced for ever my fearful and chimerical apprehenſions; and determined, without more ado, to return without even ſeeing her. You may believe me, Clara, when I proteſt to you, that I not only did not ſee her, but went back, proud of not having been ſo weak as to puſh my credulity to the end, and of having at leaſt done ſo much credit to myſelf, as not to have it ſaid of a friend of Lord B——'s, that he could not get the better of a dream.

This, my dear couſin, is what I had to tell you, and is the laſt confeſſion I have to make. The other particulars of our journey are not at all intereſting; let it ſuffice, therefore, to aſſure you, that not only his lordſhip has been very well ſatisfied with me ſince, but that I am ſtill more ſo with myſelf, who am more ſenſible of my cure than he can be. For fear of giving him any needleſs diſtruſt, I concealed from him my not having actually ſeen you. When he aſked me if the veil was drawn aſide, I anſwered without heſitation in the affirmative; and we have not mentioned it ſince. Yes, couſin, the veil is drawn aſide for ever; that veil which has ſo long hood-winked my reaſon. All my unruly paſſions are extinguiſhed. I ſee and reſpect my duty. You are both dearer to me than ever,

but

but my heart knows no difference between you; nor feels the leaſt inclination to ſeparate the inſeparables.

We arrived the day before yeſterday at Milan, and the day after to-morrow we ſhall leave it. In about a week we hope to be at Rome, and expect to find letters from you on our arrival. How tedious will ſeem the time before I ſhall ſee thoſe two ſurpriſing perſons who have ſo long troubled the repoſe of the greateſt mind! O Eloiſa! O Clara! no woman that is not equal to you is worthy of ſuch a man!

LETTER CXLVI.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

WE all waited impatiently to hear from you, ſo that you will eaſily gueſs how much pleaſure your letters gave our little community: but what you will hardly imagine is, that they ſhould give me leſs than any other perſon in the houſe. They all were pleaſed that you had happily paſſed the Alps; for my part, I had no pleaſure in reflecting that the Alps were between us.

With reſpect to the particulars of your return, we have ſaid nothing of them to the Baron; beſides, I ſkipped over ſome of your ſoliloquies, in reading your letter in company. Mr. Wolmar is ſo ingenuous, as only to laugh at you; but Eloiſa could not recollect the laſt

moments of her dying mother, without ſhedding freſh tears. Your letter had no other effect upon her than reviving her affliction.

As to myſelf, I will confeſs to you, my dear preceptor, that I am no longer ſurpriſed to ſee you in continual aſtoniſhment at yourſelf; always committing ſome new folly, and always repenting of it: you have long paſſed your life in ſelf-reproach over night, and in applauding yourſelf in the morning.

I will freely acknowledge to you, alſo, that the great effort of your courage, in turning back when ſo near us juſt as wiſe as you came, does not appear to me ſo extraordinary as it may to you. There ſeems to me more vanity in it than prudence; and I believe, upon the whole, I ſhould have liked a little leſs fortitude with more diſcretion. From ſuch a manner of running away, may not one aſk to what purpoſe you came? You were aſhamed to ſhow yourſelf, and it is of your being afraid to ſhow yourſelf that you ought in fact to be aſhamed. As if the pleaſure of ſeeing your friends were not an ample recompenſe for the petty chagrin their raillery might give you. Ought you not to have thought yourſelf happy in the opportunity of diverting us with your bewildered looks? As I could not laugh at you then, however, I will laugh at you now; though I loſe half the pleaſure in not ſeeing your confuſion.

Unhappily, there is ſomething worſe than all this; which is, that I have caught your fears, without

without having your means of diſpelling them. That dream of your's has ſomething in it ſo horrible, that I am at once terrified and afflicted with it, in ſpite of all I can do. In reading your letter I am apt to blame your agitation; after I have read it I blame your ſecurity. It is impoſſible to ſee a ſufficient reaſon for your being ſo much affected, and at the ſame time for your becoming tranquil. It is very ſtrange, that your fearful apprehenſions ſhould prevail till the very moment in which you might have been ſatisfied, and that you ſhould ſtop there. Another ſtep, a motion, a word had done the buſineſs. You were alarmed without reaſon, and compoſed again without cauſe: but you have infected me with a terrour which you no longer feel; and it appears, that if you have given an inſtance once in your life of your fortitude, it has been at my expenſe. Since the receipt of your fatal letter, my heart is conſtantly oppreſſed. I cannot approach Eloiſa, without trembling at the thoughts of loſing her. I think every now and then I ſee a deadly paleneſs overſpread her countenance; and this morning, as I embraced her, tears burſt involuntarily from me, and poured down my cheeks. O, that veil! that veil!——There is ſomething ſo prophetick in it, that it troubles me every time I think of it. No, I cannot forgive you for not removing it when you had it in your power, and fear I ſhall never have a moment's peace of mind till I ſee you again in company with her. You

muſt own, that after having talked ſo long of philoſophy, you have here given a very unſeaſonable proof of your's. Dream again, and come and ſee your friends; it were better for you to do this and be a *viſionary mortal*, than to run away from them and be a philoſopher.

It appears, by a letter of Lord B——'s to Mr. Wolmar, that he thinks ſeriouſly of coming to ſettle with us. As ſoon as he is determined, and his heart has made its choice, may you both return ſtedfaſt and happy! This is the conſtant prayer of our little community, and above all that of your friend,

CLARA ORBE.

P. S.—If you really heard nothing of our converſation in the Elyſium, it is perhaps ſo much the better for you; for you know me to be vigilant enough to ſee ſome people without their ſeeing me, and ſevere enough to verify the proverb, that "*liſteners ſeldom hear any good of themſelves.*"

LETTER CXLVII.

FROM MR. WOLMAR.

AS I write to Lord B——, and explain myſelf ſo fully with reſpect to you, I have hardly any thing more to ſay at preſent than to refer you to his letter. Your's would perhaps require of me a return of civilities; but theſe I had rather make in actions than in words. To make you one of my family, to treat you as my brother,

brother, my friend; to make her you loved your ſiſter; to put into your hands a paternal authority over my children; to inveſt you with my privileges, after having robbed you of your's; theſe are the compliments I have to make you. If, on your part, you juſtify my conduct, it will be ſufficient praiſe. I have endeavoured to honour you with my eſteem; it is your's to honour me by your merit. Let no other encomiums paſs between us.

So far am I from being ſurpriſed at ſeeing you affected with a dream, that I ſee no very good reaſon for your reproaching yourſelf for being ſo. One dream more or leſs ſeems to be of no importance in ſuch ſyſtematical gentlemen as yourſelf, whoſe very principles are ſo viſionary.

What I reproach you for is leſs the effect of your dream, than the ſpecies of it; and that for a reaſon very different, perhaps, from what you may imagine. A certain tyrant once condemned a man to death for dreaming that he had ſtabbed him. Recollect the reaſon he gave for that ſentence, and make the application. What! you are going to determine the fate of your friend, and you are thinking of your old amours! Had it not been for the converſation of the preceding evening, I ſhould never forgive you that dream. Think in the day-time of what you are going to do at Rome, and you will dream leſs at night of what is doing at Vevay.

The little French-woman is ſick, which keeps Mrs. Wolmar ſo conſtantly employed

that

that ſhe has not time to write to you. Somebody, however, will willingly take upon themſelves that agreeable taſk. Happy youth! to whoſe happineſs every thing conſpires! the rewards of virtue all await your merit. As to that of my good will, trouble no one with it: it is from you only I expect it.

LETTER CXLVIII.

TO MR. WOLMAR.

LET this letter be kept to ourſelves. Let the errours of the beſt of men be for ever buried in profound ſecreſy. In what a dangerous taſk have I engaged! O my ſenſible and generous friend! why do I not retain your council in my memory, as I do your benevolence at my heart! never did I before ſtand in more need of your prudence, nor did ever the apprehenſions of falling ſhort of it ſo much embarraſs the little I have. Ah! what is become of your paternal advice, your inſtruction, your knowledge? what will become of me without you? Yes, I would give up every flattering proſpect in life to have you here in this critical moment, though but for one week.

I have been deceived in all my conjectures: I have as yet done nothing but blunder. I was afraid only of the Marchioneſs. After having ſeen her, and been ſtruck with admiration at her beauty and addreſs, I applied myſelf with all my

my might to wean the affections of her noble lover from ſo attracting an object. Charmed with the thoughts of bringing him over to the ſide where I thought there was no danger, I launched out in the praiſe of Laura, and ſpoke of her with the eſteem and admiration with which ſhe had inſpired me: in weakening his ſtronger attachment for her rival, I hoped, by degrees, entirely to deſtroy both. My lord readily gave into my deſign; and, exceeding even the bounds of complaiſance, perhaps to puniſh my importunities, by alarming me on the other ſide, affected a much greater warmth of paſſion for Laura than he really felt. But what ſhall I ſay to him now? the ardour of his paſſion remains without any affectation. His heart, exhauſted by ſo many tryals, was left in a ſtate of weakneſs, of which ſhe has taken the advantage. It would be difficult indeed for any man long to affect a paſſion for her which he did not feel. In fact, it is impoſſible to look upon this lovely unfortunate, without being ſtruck by her air and figure; a certain caſt of languor and depreſſion, which conſtantly ſhades her charming features, in damping the vivacity of her looks, renders them but the more affecting; even as the ſun darts its rays through the paſſing clouds, ſo her eyes caſt the more piercing looks through the clouds of grief that obſcure their luſtre. Her very dejection has all the grace of modeſty; in ſeeing, one pities her; in hearing, one reſpects

her.

her. In ſhort, I can avow, in juſtification of my friend, that I know only two men in the world who could ſee and converſe with her without danger.

Oh, Wolmar! he is loſt to reaſon. I ſee, and feel it; I own it to you with bitterneſs of heart. I tremble to think how far his extravagant paſſion may make him forget himſelf and his duty. I tremble leſt that intrepid love of virtue, which makes him deſpiſe the opinion of the world, ſhould hurry him into the other extreme, and lead him to treſpaſs even the ſacred laws of decorum and decency. Shall my Lord B—— contract ſuch a marriage? Can you think it—under the eye of his friend too! who ſees, who ſuffers it!—and who lies under infinite obligations to him! No, he ſhall rip open my breaſt, and tear out my heart with his own hand, ere he ſhall thus abuſe it.

But, what ſhall I do! how ſhall I behave myſelf? you know his impetuoſity of temper. Argument will avail nothing; and his diſcourſe of late has only increaſed my apprehenſions for him. At firſt, I affected not to underſtand him, and reaſoned indirectly in general maxims; he in turn affected not to underſtand me. If I endeavour to touch him a little more to the quick, he anſwers ſententiouſly, and imagines he has refuted me. If I reply, and enforce my argument, he flies into a paſſion, and talks in a manner ſo unfriendly, that a real friend knows not how to anſwer him. You may believe that

on

on this occaſion I am neither timid nor baſhful; when we are doing our duty, we are too apt to be proud and tenacious; but pride has nothing to do here; it is neceſſary I ſhould ſucceed; and unſucceſsful attempts will only prejudice better means. I hardly dare enter with him into any argument, for I every day experience the truth of what you told me, that he is a better reaſoner than I, and that the way to win him to my party is not to irritate him by diſpute.

Beſides, he looks a little cold upon me at preſent. Appearances would make one apt to think he is uneaſy at my importunity. How this weakneſs debaſes a man in ſo many reſpects ſuperior to the reſt of mankind! the great, the ſublime Lord B—— ſtands in awe of his friend, his creature, his pupil! it even ſeems, by ſome words he has let fall concerning the choice of his reſidence if he does not marry, that he has a mind to try my fidelity, by oppoſing it to my intereſt. He well knows I ought not, neither can I leave him. No, I will do my duty, and follow my benefactor. If I were baſe and mean, what ſhould I gain by my perfidy? Eloiſa and her generous huſband would not truſt the education of their children to one who hath betrayed his friend. You have often told me, that the inferior paſſions are not eaſily converted from their purſuit; but that the ſuperior ones may be armed againſt themſelves. I imagined I might be able to make uſe of that maxim in the preſent caſe. In fact, the motives of compaſ-

ſion,

ſion, of a contempt for the prejudices of the world, of habit, of every thing that determines my Lord B —— on this occaſion, are of that inferior nature, and elude all my attacks: whereas, true love is inſeparable from generoſity, and by that one always has ſome hold of him. I have attempted that indirect method, and deſpair not of ſucceſs. It may ſeem cruel; and, to ſay truth, I have not done it without ſome repugnance: all circumſtances, however, conſidered, I conceive I am doing ſervice even to Laura herſelf. What would ſhe do in the rank to which ſhe might be raiſed by marriage, but expoſe her former ignominy? but, how great may ſhe not be in remaining what ſhe is! If I know any thing of that extraordinary young lady, ſhe is better formed to enjoy the ſacrifice ſhe has made, than the rank ſhe ought to refuſe. If this reſource fails me, there remains one more in the magiſtracy, on account of their difference of religion; but this method ſhall not be taken till I am reduced to the laſt extremity, and have tried every other in vain. Whatever may happen, I ſhall ſpare nothing to prevent ſo unworthy and diſgraceful an alliance. Believe me, my dear Wolmar, I ſhall be tenacious of your eſteem to the lateſt hour of my life, and whatever my lord may write to you, whatever you may have ſaid, depend on it, coſt what it will, while this heart beats within my breaſt, Lauretta Piſana ſhall not be Lady B——.

If you approve of my meaſures, this letter needs no anſwer; if you think me in any wiſe miſtaken, oblige me with your inſtructions. But be expeditious, for there is not a moment to loſe. I ſhall have my letter directed by a ſtrange hand: do the ſame by your anſwer. After having read what I have written, pleaſe, alſo, to burn my letter, and be ſilent as to its contents. This is the firſt and the only ſecret I ever deſired you to conceal from my two couſins: and if I had dared to confide more in my own judgement, you yourſelf ſhould have known nothing of it*.

LETTER CXLIX.

MRS. WOLMAR TO MRS. ORBE.

THE courier from Italy ſeemed only to wait your departure, for his own arrival; as if to puniſh you for having ſtaid only for him. Not that I myſelf made the pretty diſcovery of the cauſe of your loitering; it was my huſband who obſerved, that after the horſes had been put to at eight o'clock, you deferred your departure till eleven; not out of regard to us, but for a reaſon eaſy to be gueſſed at, from your aſking

* For the better underſtanding this letter, the reader ſhould have been made acquainted with the adventures of Lord B—, which at firſt I had indeed ſome notion of inſerting in this collection. But, on ſecond thoughts, I could not reſolve to ſpoil the ſimplicity of this hiſtory of the two lovers, with the romance of his. It is better to *leave ſomething* to the reader's imagination.

aſking twenty times if it was ten o'clock, becauſe the poſt generally goes by at that time.

Yes, my dear couſin, you are caught; you cannot deny it. In ſpite of the prophetick Chaillot, her Clara, ſo wild, or rather ſo diſcreet, has not been ſo to the end. You are caught in the ſame toils from which you took ſo much pains to extricate your friend, and have not been able to preſerve that liberty yourſelf, to which you reſtored me. It is my turn to laugh now. Ah! my dear friend, one ought to have your talents to know how to laugh like you, and give even to raillery the affecting turn and appearance of kindneſs. Beſides, what a difference in our ſituation! with what face can I divert myſelf with an evil, of which I am the cauſe, and from which you have taken upon yourſelf to free me. There is not a ſentiment in your breaſt that does not awake a ſenſe of gratitude in mine; even your weakneſs being in you the effect of virtue. It is this which conſoles and diverts me. My errours are to be lamented; but one may laugh at the falſe modeſty which makes you bluſh at a paſſion as innocent as yourſelf.

But to return to your Italian courier, and leave moralizing for a while. This courier then, who has been ſo long in coming, you will aſk what he has brought us. Nothing but good news of our friends, and a letter as big as a packet for you. Oho! I ſee you ſmile and take breath now. As the letter is ſent you, however, you will doubtleſs wait patiently to know what it contains.

contains. It may yet nevertheleſs be of ſome eſtimation, even though it did not come when expected; for it breathes ſuch a tender——but I will only write news to you, and I dare ſay what I was going to ſay is none.

With that letter is come another from Lord B—— to my huſband, with a great many compliments alſo for us. This contains ſome real news, which is ſo much the more unexpected, as the firſt was ſilent on the ſubject. Our friends at Rome were to ſet out the next day for Naples, where Lord B—— has ſome buſineſs; and from whence they are to go to ſee Mount Veſuvius.——Can you conceive, my dear, that ſuch a ſight can be entertaining? but on their return to Rome, think, Clara, gueſs what may happen.—Lord B—— is on the point of being married——not, I thank heaven, to that unworthy Marchioneſs, who he tells us, on the contrary, is much indiſpoſed. To whom then?————To Laura, the amiable Laura, who——yet, what a marriage! our friend ſays not a word about it. Immediately after the marriage they will all three ſet out, and come hither, to take their future meaſures. What they are to be my huſband has not told me; but he expects that St. Preux will ſtay with us.

I muſt confeſs to you his ſilence gives me ſome little uneaſineſs; I cannot ſee clearly through it. I think I ſee an odd peculiarity of circumſtances, and conteſt of human paſſions abſolutely unintelligible. I cannot ſee how ſo

good

good a man ſhould contract ſo laſting an affection for ſo bad a woman as the Marchioneſs, or indeed, how a woman of ſuch a violent and cruel temper could entertain ſo ardent a love, if one may ſo call her guilty paſſion, for a man of ſo different a diſpoſition. Neither can I imagine, how a young creature, ſo generous, affectionate, and diſintereſted as Laura could be able to ſupport her firſt diſſoluteneſs of manners; how that flattering and deceitful tenderneſs of heart, which miſleads our ſex, ſhould recover her; how love, which is the ruin of ſo many modeſt women, ſhould make her chaſte.

Will Lady B—— then come hither? Hither, my dear Clara! what do you think of it? After all, what a prodigy muſt that aſtoniſhing woman be, who, ruined by a diſſolute and abandoned education, was reclaimed by her tenderneſs of heart, and whom love hath conducted to virtue! Ought any one to admire her more than I, who have acted quite contrary: who was led aſtray by inclination, when every thing elſe conſpired to conduct me in the paths of virtue. I ſunk not ſo low, it is true; but I have raiſed myſelf like her? Have I avoided ſo many ſnares, and made ſuch ſacrifices as ſhe has made? From the loweſt ignominy ſhe has riſen to the higheſt degree of honour, and is a thouſand times more reſpectable than if ſhe had never fallen. She has ſenſe and virtue: what needs ſhe more to reſemble us? If it be impoſſible for a woman to repair the errours of her youth, what right have I to more indul-

gence than ſhe? With whom can I hope to ſtand excuſed, and to what reſpect can I pretend, if I refuſe to reſpect her?

And yet, though my heart tells me this, my heart ſpeaks againſt it; and, without being able to tell why, I cannot think it right that Lord B— ſhould contract ſuch a marriage, and that his friends ſhould be concerned in the affair. Such is the force of prejudice! ſo difficult is it to ſhake off the yoke of publick opinion! which, nevertheleſs, generally induces us to be unjuſt: the paſt good is effaced by the preſent evil; but, is the paſt evil ever effaced by any preſent good?

I hinted to my huſband my uneaſineſs as to the conduct of St. Preux in this affair. "He ſeems (ſaid I) to be aſhamed to ſpeak of it to my couſin: I know he is incapable of baſeneſs, but he is too eaſy, and may have too much indulgence for the foibles of a friend."—"No (anſwered he) he has done what he ought, and I know will continue to do ſo; this is all I am at liberty to tell you at preſent of the matter; but St. Preux is honeſt, and I will engage for him, you will be ſatisfied with his conduct."—It is impoſſible, Clara, that Wolmar can deceive me, or St. Preux him. So poſitive an aſſurance, therefore, fully ſatisfied me; and made me ſuſpect my ſcruples to be the effect of a falſe delicacy, and that if I was leſs vain and more equitable, I ſhould find Laura more deſerving the rank of Lady B——.

But,

But, to take leave of her for the preſent, and return to ourſelves. Don't you perceive too well, in reading this letter, that our friends are likely to return ſooner than we expected? and is not your heart a little affected by it? Does it not flutter, and beat quicker than ordinary? that heart too ſuſceptible, and too nearly akin to mine? is it not apprehenſive of the danger of living familiarly with a beloved object? to ſee him every day; to ſleep under the ſame roof? and if my errours did not leſſen me in your eſteem, does not my example give you reaſon to fear for yourſelf? In your younger years, how many apprehenſions for my ſafety did not your good ſenſe and friendſhip ſuggeſt, which a blind paſſion made me deſpiſe! It is now, my dear friend, my turn to be apprehenſive for you, and I have the better claim to your regard, as what I have to offer is founded on ſad experience. Attend to me, then, ere it be too late; leſt, having paſſed half your life in lamenting my errours, you ſhould paſs the other in lamenting your own. Above all things, place not too great a confidence in your gaiety of temper, which, though it may be a ſecurity to thoſe who have nothing to fear, generally betrays thoſe who are in real danger. You, my dear Clara, once laughed at love, but that was becauſe you were a ſtranger to the paſſion; and, not having felt its power, you thought yourſelf above its attacks. Love is avenged, and laughs in its turn at you. Learn to diſtruſt its deceitful mirth, leſt it ſhould one day coſt you an

equal

equal portion of grief. It is time, my dear friend, to lay you open to yourſelf; for hitherto you have not taken that intereſting view: you are miſtaken in your own character, and know not how to ſet a juſt value upon yourſelf. You confide in the opinion of Chaillot; who, becauſe of your vivacity of diſpoſition, judged you to be little ſuſceptible of heart; but a heart like your's was beyond her talents to penetrate. Chaillot was incapable of knowing you, nor does any perſon in the world know you truely but myſelf. I have left you in your miſtake ſo long as it could be of ſervice to you, but at preſent it may be hurtful, and, therefore, it is neceſſary to undeceive you.

You are lively, and imagine yourſelf to have but little ſenſibility. How much, alas! are you deceived: your vivacity itſelf proves evidently the contrary. Is it not always exerted on ſentimental ſubjects? does not even your pleaſantry come from the heart? Your raillery is a greater proof of your affection than the compliments of others; you ſmile, but your ſmiles penetrate our hearts; you laugh, but your laughter draws from us the tears of affection: and I have remarked, that among thoſe who are indifferent to you, you are always ſerious.

If you really were no other than you pretend to be, tell me, what motive could have ſo forcibly united us? where had been thoſe bonds of unparalleled friendſhip that now ſubſiſt between us? By what miracle ſhould ſuch an

attachment give the preference to a heart ſo little capable of it? Can ſhe who lived but for her friend be incapable of love? ſhe who would have left father, huſband, relations, and country to have followed her? What have I done in compariſon of this! I, who have confeſſedly a ſuſceptible heart, and permitted myſelf to love; yet, with all my ſenſibility, have hardly been able to return your friendſhip! Theſe contradictions have inſtilled into your head as whimſical an idea of your own character as ſuch a giddy brain can conceive: which is, to conceit yourſelf at once the warmeſt friend and the coldeſt lover. Incapable of diſowning thoſe gentle ties with which you perceived you were bound, you thought yourſelf incapable of being fettered by any other. You thought nothing in the world could affect you but Eloiſa; as if thoſe hearts which are by nature ſuſceptible could be affected but by one object; and as if, becauſe you love no other than me, I could be the proper object of your affection. You pleaſantly aſked me once, if ſouls were of a different ſex. No, my dear, the ſoul is of no ſex; but its affections make that diſtinction, and you begin to be too ſenſible of it. Becauſe the firſt lover that offered himſelf did not affect you, you immediately concluded no other could: becauſe you was not in love with your ſuitor, you concluded you could never be in love with any one. When he became your huſband, however, you loved him, and that with ſo ardent

an affection, that it injured even the intimacy with your friend: that heart, ſo little ſuſceptible, as you pretend, could annex to love as tender a ſupplement to ſatisfy the fond deſires of a worthy man.

Ah, my poor couſin! it is your taſk for the future to reſolve your own doubts, and if it be true,

Ch'un freddo amante è mal ſ.curo amico,
That a cold lover is a faithleſs friend,

I am greatly afraid I have at preſent one reaſon more than ever I had to rely upon you. But to go on with what I had to ſay to you on this ſubject.

I ſuſpect that you were in love much ſooner than you perhaps imagine; or, at leaſt, that the ſame inclination which ruined me would have ſeduced you, had I not been firſt caught in the ſnare. Can you conceive a ſentiment ſo natural and agreeable could be ſo ſlow in its birth? Can you conceive that at our age we could either of us live in a familiarity with an amiable young man without danger, or that the conformity ſo general in our taſte and inclination ſhould not extend to this particular? No, my dear, you, I am certain, would have loved him if I had not loved him firſt. Leſs weak, though not leſs ſuſceptible, you might have been more prudent than I without being more happy. But what inclination would have prevailed on your generous mind over the horrour you would have felt at

the infidelity of betraying your friend! It was our friendſhip that ſaved you from the ſnares of love; you reſpected my lover with the ſame friendſhip, and thus redeemed your heart at the expenſe of mine.

Theſe conjectures are not ſo void of foundation as you may imagine; and had I a mind to recollect thoſe times which I could wiſh to forget, it would not be difficult for me to trace even in the care you imagined you took only in my concerns, a further care, ſtill more intereſting, in thoſe of the object of my affection. Not daring to love him yourſelf, you encouraged me to do it; you thought each of us neceſſary to the happineſs of theother, and, therefore, that heart, which has not its equal in the world, loved us both the more tenderly. Be aſſured, that had it not been for your own weakneſs, you would not have been ſo indulgent to me; but you would have reproached yourſelf for a juſt ſeverity towards me, with an imputation of jealouſy. You were conſcious of having no right to contend with a paſſion in me, which ought, nevertheleſs, to have been ſubdued; and, being more fearful of betraying your friend than of not acting diſcreetly, you thought, in offering up your own happineſs to our's, you had made a ſufficient ſacrifice to virtue.

This, my dear Clara, is your hiſtory; thus hath your deſpotick friendſhip laid me under the neceſſity of being obliged to you for my ſhame, and of thanking you for my errours. Think not, however,

however, that I would imitate you in this. I am no more diſpoſed to follow your example than you mine; and as you have no reaſon to fear falling into my errours, I have no longer, thank heaven! the ſame reaſons for granting you indulgence. What better uſe can I make of that virtue to which you reſtored me, than to make it inſtrumental in the preſervation of your's?

Let me, therefore, give you my further advice on the preſent occaſion. The long abſence of our preceptor has not leſſened your regard for him. Your being left again at liberty, and his return, have given riſe to opportunity, which love hath been ingenious enough to improve. It is not a new ſentiment produced in your heart; it is only one which, long concealed there, has at length ſeiſed this occaſion to diſcover itſelf. Proud enough to avow it to yourſelf, you are perhaps impatient to confeſs it to me. That confeſſion might ſeem to you almoſt neceſſary to make it quite innocent; in becoming a crime in your friend it ceaſed to be one in you, and perhaps you only gave yourſelf up to the paſſion you ſo many years contended with, the more effectually to cure your friend.

I was ſenſible, my dear, of all this: and was little alarmed at a paſſion which I ſaw would be my own protection, and on account of which you have nothing to reproach yourſelf. The winter we paſſed together in peace and friendſhip gave

me yet more hopes of you; for I ſaw that ſo far from loſing your vivacity, you ſeemed to have improved it. I frequently obſerved you affectionate, earneſt, attentive: but frank in your profeſſions, ingenuous even in your raillery, unreſerved and open, and in your livelieſt ſallies the picture of innocence.

Since our converſation in the *Elyſium*, I have not ſo much reaſon to be ſatisfied with you. I find you frequently ſad and penſive. You take as much pleaſure in being alone as with your friend: you have not changed your language, but your accent; you are more cautious in your pleaſantry; you don't mention him ſo often; one would think you were in conſtant fear leſt he ſhould overhear you; and it is eaſy to ſee by your uneaſineſs that you want to hear from him much oftener than you confeſs.

I tremble, my good couſin, leſt you ſhould not be ſenſible of the worſt of your diſorder, and that the ſhaft has pierced deeper than you ſeem to be aware of. Probe your heart, my dear, to the bottom; and then tell me, again I repeat it, tell me if the moſt prudent woman does not run a riſk by being long in the company of a beloved object; tell me if the confidence which ruined me can be entirely harmleſs to you; you are both at liberty; this is the very circumſtance that makes opportunity dangerous. In a mind truely virtuous, there is no weakneſs will get the better of conſcience, and I agree with you, that one has always fortitude

titude enough to avoid committing a wilful crime: but, alas! what is a conſtant protection againſt human weakneſs? Reflect, however, on conſequences; think on the effects of ſhame. We muſt pay a due reſpect to ourſelves, if we expect to receive it from others; for how can we flatter ourſelves that others will pay to us what we have not for ourſelves? or where can we think ſhe will ſtop in the career of vice, who ſets out without fear? Theſe arguments I ſhould uſe even to women who pay no regard to religion and morality, and have no rule of conduct but the opinion of others: but with you, whoſe principles are thoſe of virtue and chriſtianity, who are ſenſible of, and reſpect, your duty, who know and follow other rules than thoſe of publick opinion, your firſt honour is to ſtand excuſed by your own conſcience, and that is the moſt important.

Would you know where you are wrong in this whole affair? It is, I ſay again, in being aſhamed of entertaining a ſentiment which you have only to declare, to render it perfectly innocent: but with all your vivacity, no creature in the world is more timid. You affect pleaſantry only to ſhow your courage, your poor heart trembling all the while for fear. In pretending to ridicule your paſſion, you do exactly like children, who ſing in the dark becauſe they are afraid. O my dear friend, reflect on what you yourſelf have often ſaid; it is a falſe ſhame which leads to real diſgrace, and

virtue never bluſhes at any thing but what is criminal. Is love in itſelf a crime? does it not, on the contrary, conſiſt of the moſt refined as well as the moſt pleaſing of all inclinations? Is not its end laudable and virtuous? Does it ever enter into baſe and vulgar minds? Does it not animate only the great and noble? Does it not ennoble their ſentiments? Does it not raiſe them even above themſelves? Alas! if to be prudent and virtuous we muſt be inſenſible to love, among whom could virtue find its votaries on earth? Among the refuſe of nature and the dregs of mankind.

Why then do you reproach yourſelf? Have you not made choice of a worthy man? Is he not diſengaged? Are not you ſo too? Does he not deſerve all your eſteem? Has he not the greateſt regard for you? Will you not be even too happy in conferring happineſs on a friend ſo worthy of that name; paying, with your hand and heart, the debts long ago contracted by your friend; and in doing him honour by raiſing him to yourſelf, as a reward to unſucceſsful, to perſecuted merit.

I ſee what petty ſcruples ſtill lie in your way. The receding from a declared reſolution, by taking a ſecond huſband; the expoſing your weakneſs to the world; the marrying a needy adventurer; for low minds, always laviſh of ſcandal, will doubtleſs ſo call him. Theſe are the reaſons which make you rather aſhamed of your paſſion than willing to juſtify it; that make

you

you deſirous of ſtifling it in your boſom, rather than render it legitimate. But, pray, does the ſhame lie in marrying the man one loves, or in loving without marrying him? between theſe lies your choice. The regard you owe to the deceaſed requires you ſhould reſpect his widow ſo much, as rather to give her a huſband than a gallant: and, if your youth obliges you to make choice of one to ſupply his place, is it not paying a further regard to his memory, to fix that choice upon the man he moſt eſteemed when living?

As to his inferiority in point of fortune, I ſhall perhaps only offend you in replying to ſo frivolous an objection, when it is oppoſed to good ſenſe and virtue. I know of no debaſing inequality, but that which ariſes either from character or education. To whatever rank a man of a mean diſpoſition and low principle may riſe, an alliance with him will always be ſcandalous. But a man educated in the ſentiments of virtue and honour is equal to any other in the world, and may take place in whatever rank he pleaſes. You know what were the ſentiments of your father, when your friend was propoſed for me. His family is reputable though obſcure, he is every where deſervedly eſteemed. With all this, was he the loweſt of mankind, he would deſerve your conſideration: for it is ſurely better to derogate from nobility than virtue; and the wife of a mechanick is more reputable than the miſtreſs of a prince.

I have a glimpſe of another kind of embarraſſment, in the neceſſity you lie under of making the firſt declaration: for, before he preſumes to aſpire to you, it is neceſſary you ſhould give him permiſſion; this is one of the circumſtances juſtly attending an inequality of rank, which often obliges the ſuperior to make the moſt mortifying advances.

As to this difficulty, I can eaſily forgive you, and even confeſs it would appear to me of real conſequence, if I could not find out a method to remove it. I hope you depend ſo far on me as to believe this may be brought about without your being ſeen in it; and on my part, I depend ſo much on my meaſures, that I ſhall undertake it with aſſurance of ſucceſs: for, notwithſtanding what you both formerly told me of the difficulty of converting a friend into a lover, if I can read that heart which I too long ſtudied, I don't believe that on this occaſion any great art will be neceſſary. I propoſe, therefore, to charge myſelf with this negociation, to the end that you may indulge yourſelf in the pleaſure of his return, without reſerve, regret, danger, or ſcandal. Ah! my dear couſin! how delighted ſhall I be to unite for ever two hearts ſo well formed for each other, and which have been long united in mine. May they ſtill (if poſſible) be more cloſely united! may we have but one heart amongſt us! Yes, Clara, you will ſerve your friend by indulging your love, and I ſhall be more certain of my own ſentiments, when I

ſhall

ſhall no longer make a diſtinction between him and you.

But if, notwithſtanding what I have alledged, you will not give into this project, my advice is, at all events, to baniſh this dangerous man; always to be dreaded by one or the other: for, be it as it may, the education of our children is ſtill leſs important to us than the virtue of their mothers. I leave you to reflect during your journey on what I have written. We will talk further about it on your return.

I ſend this letter directly to Geneva; leſt, as you were to lie but one night at Lauſanne, it ſhould not find you there. Pray, bring me a good account of that little republick. From the agreeable deſcription, I ſhould think you happy in the opportunity of ſeeing it, if I could ſet any ſtore by pleaſures purchaſed with the abſence of my friends. I never loved grandeur, and at preſent I hate it, for having deprived me of ſo many years of your company. Neither you nor I, my dear, went to buy our wedding clothes at Geneva; and yet, however deſerving your brother may be, I much doubt whether your ſiſter-in-law will be more happy, with her Flanders lace and India ſilks, than we in our native ſimplicity. I charge you, however, notwithſtanding my ill-natured reflexions, to engage them to celebrate their nuptials at Clarens. My father hath written to your's, and my huſband to the bride's mother, to invite them hither. Theſe letters you will find encloſed:

pleaſe to deliver them, and enforce their invitations with your intereſt. This is all I could do, in order to be preſent at the ceremony; for I declare to you, I would not upon any account leave my family. Adieu! Let me have a line from you, at leaſt to let me know when I am to expect you here. It is now the ſecond day ſince you left me, and I know not how I ſhall ſupport two days more without you.

P. S.—While I was writting this letter, Miſs Harriet truely muſt give herſelf the air of writing to her mama too. As I always like children ſhould write their own thoughts, and not thoſe which are dictated to them, I indulged her curioſity; and let her write juſt what ſhe pleaſed, without altering a word. This makes the third letter encloſed. I doubt, however, whether this is what you look for in caſting your eye over the contents of the packet. But, for the other letter you need not look long, as you will not find it. It is directed to you at Clarens; and at Clarens only it ought to be read; ſo take your meaſures accordingly.

LETTER CL.

HARRIET TO HER MOTHER.

WHERE are you, then, mama? They ſay at Geneva; which is ſuch a long, long way off, that one muſt ride two days, all day long, to reach you: ſurely, mama, you don't

don't intend to go round the world; my little papa is ſet out this morning for Etange; my little grand-papa is gone a-hunting; my little mama is gone into her cloſet to write; and there is nobody with me but Parnette and the French-woman. Indeed, mama, I don't know how it is; but, ſince our good friend has left us, we are all ſcattered about ſtrangely. You began firſt, mama; you ſoon began to be tired, when you had nobody left to teaze: but what is much worſe ſince you are gone is, that my little mama is not ſo good-humoured as when you were here. My little boy is very well, but he does not love you, becauſe you did not dance him yeſterday as you uſed to do. As for me, I believe I ſhould love you a little bit ſtill, if you would return quickly, that one might not be ſo dull. But, if you would make it up with me quite, you muſt bring my little boy ſomething that would pleaſe him. To quiet him, indeed, would not be very eaſy; you would be puzzled to know what to do with him. O that our good friend was but here now! for it is, as he ſaid; my fine fan is broke to pieces, my blue ſkirt is torn all to bits, my white frock is in tatters; my mittens are not worth a farthing. Fare you well, mama, I muſt here end my letter; for my little mama has finiſhed her's, and is coming out of her cloſet. I think her eyes are red, but I durſt not ſay ſo: in reading this, however, ſhe will ſee I obſerved it. My

good

good mama, you are certainly very naughty to make my little mama cry.

P. S.—Give my love to my grand-papa, to my uncles, to my new aunt and her mama, and to every body; tell them I would kiſs them all, and you too, mama; but that you are all ſo far off, I can't reach you.

LETTER CLI.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

I Cannot leave Lauſanne without writing you a line to acquaint you of my ſafe arrival here; not, however, ſo chearfully diſpoſed as I could wiſh. I promiſed myſelf much pleaſure in a journey which you have been ſo often tempted to take; but, in refuſing to accompany me, you have made it almoſt diſagreeable; and how ſhould it be otherwiſe? when it is troubleſome I have all the trouble to myſelf, and when it is tolerably agreeable, I regret your not being with me to partake of the pleaſure. I had nothing to ſay, it is true, againſt your reaſons for ſtaying at home; but you muſt not think I was therefore ſatisfied with them. If you do, indeed, my good couſin, you are miſtaken; for the very reaſon why I am diſſatisfied is, that I have no right to be ſo. I wonder you are not aſhamed of yourſelf, to have always the beſt of the argument, and to prevent your friend from having

having what ſhe likes, without leaving her one good reaſon to find fault with you. All had gone to rack and ruin, no doubt, had you left your huſband, your family, and your little marmottes in the lurch for one week: it had been a wild ſcheme, to be ſure; but I ſhould have liked you a hundred times the better for it; whereas, in aiming to be all perfection, you are good for nothing at all, and are only fit to keep company with angels.

Notwithſtanding our paſt diſagreement, I could not help being moved at the ſight of my friends and relations; who, on their part, received me with pleaſure; or, at leaſt, with a profuſion of civilities. I can give you no account of my brother, till I am better acquainted with him. With a tolerable figure, he has a good deal of the formal air of the country he comes from. He is ſerious, cold, and I think has a ſurly haughtineſs in his diſpoſition, which makes me apprehenſive for his wife, that he will not prove ſo tractable a huſband as our's; but will take upon him a good deal of the lord and maſter.

My father was ſo delighted to ſee me, that he even left unfiniſhed the peruſal of an account of a great battle which the French, as if to verify the prediction of our friend, have lately gained in Flanders. Thank heaven, he was not there! Can you conceive the intrepid Lord B—— would ſtand to ſee his countrymen run away, or that he would have joined them in

their flight? No, never; he would ſooner have ruſhed a thouſand times on death.

But, *à-propos*, of our friend—our other friend hath not written for ſome time. Was not yeſterday the day for the courier to come from Italy? If you receive any letters, I hope you will not forget I am a party concerned in the news.

Adieu! my dear couſin; I muſt ſet out. I ſhall expect your letters at Geneva; where we hope to arrive to-morrow by dinner-time. As for the reſt, you may be aſſured, that, by ſome means or other, you ſhall be at the wedding; and that, if you abſolutely will not come to Lauſanne, I will come with my whole company to plunder Clarens, and drink up all the wine that is to be found in the town.

LETTER CLII.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

UPON my word, my dear, you have read me a charming lecture! you keep it up to a miracle! you ſeem to depend, however, too much on the ſalutary effect of your ſermons. Without pretending to judge whether they would formerly have lulled your preceptor to ſleep, I can aſſure you they do not put me to ſleep at preſent; on the contrary, that which you ſent me yeſterday was ſo far from affecting me with drowſineſs, that it kept me awake all night. I bar, however,

ever, the remarks of that Argus, your huſband, if he ſhould ſee the letter. But I will write in ſome order, and I proteſt to you, you had better burn your fingers than ſhow it him.

If I ſhould be very methodical, and recapitulate with you article for article, I ſhould uſurp your privilege; I had better, therefore, ſet them down as they come into my head; to affect a little modeſty alſo, and not give you too much fair-play, I will not begin with our travellers, or the courier from Italy. At the worſt, if it ſhould ſo happen, I ſhall only have my letter to write over again, and to reverſe it, by putting the beginning at the latter end. I am determined, however, to begin with the ſuppoſed Lady B——. I can aſſure you I am offended at the very title; nor ſhall I ever forgive St. Preux for permitting her to take it, Lord B—— for conferring it on her, or you for acknowledging it. Shall Eloiſa Wolmar receive Lauretta Piſana into her houſe! permit her to live with her!—think of it, child, again. Would not ſuch a condeſcenſion in you be the moſt cruel mortification to her? Can you be ignorant that the air you breath is fatal to infamy? will the poor unfortunate dare to mix her breath with your's? will ſhe dare to approach you? She would be as much affected by your preſence as a creature poſſeſſed would be at the ſacred relicks in the hand of the exorciſt: your looks would make her ſink into the earth; the very ſight of you would kill her.

Not

Not that I deſpiſe the unhappy Laura; God forbid! On the contrary, I admire and reſpect her, the more as her reformation is heroick and extraordinary. But is it ſufficient to authoriſe thoſe mean compariſons by which you debaſe yourſelf; as if in the indulgence of the greateſt weakneſs there was not ſomething in true love that is a conſtant ſecurity to our perſon, and which made us tenacious of our honour? but I comprehend and excuſe you. You have but a confuſed view of low and diſtant objects: you look down from your ſublime and elevated ſtation upon the earth, and ſee no inequalities on its ſurface. Your devout humility knows how to take an advantage even of your virtue.

But what end will all this ſerve? will our natural ſenſations make the leſs impreſſion? Will our ſelf-love be leſs active? In ſpite of your arguments you feel a repugnance at this match: you tax your ſenſations with pride; you would ſtrive againſt them, and attribute them to prejudice. But, tell me, my dear, how long has the ſcandal attendant on vice conſiſted in mere opinion; what friendſhip do you think can poſſibly ſubſiſt between you and a woman, before whom one cannot mention chaſtity or virtue without making her burſt into tears of ſhame, without renewing her ſorrows, without even inſulting her penitence? Believe me, my dear, we may reſpect Laura, but we ought not to ſee her; to avoid her is the regard which modeſt women owe

to

to her merit: it would be cruel to make her ſuffer in our company.

I will go farther. You ſay your heart tells you this marriage ought not to take place. Is not this as much as to tell you it will not. Your friend ſays nothing about it in his letter! in the letter which he wrote to me! and yet you ſay this letter is a very long one—and then comes the diſcourſe between you and your huſband—— that huſband of your's is a ſly-boots, and ye are a couple of cheats thus to trick me out of the news ye have heard. But then your huſband's ſentiments!—methinks his ſentiments were not ſo neceſſary; particularly for you who have ſeen the letter, nor indeed were they for me, who have not ſeen it: for I am more certain of the conduct of your friend from my own ſentiments, than from all the wiſdom of philoſophy.

See there, now!—did I not tell you ſo! that intruder will be thruſting himſelf in, nobody knows how. For fear he ſhould come again, however, as we are now got into his chapter, let us go through it, that it may be over, and we may have nothing to do with him again.

Let us not bewilder ourſelves with conjectures. Had you not been Eloiſa, had not your friend been your lover, I know not what buſineſs he would now have had with you, nor what I ſhould have had to do with him. All I know is, that if my ill ſtars had ſo ordered it that he had firſt made love to me, it had been all over with

with his poor head; for whether I am a fool or not, I ſhould certainly have made him one. But what ſignifies what I might have been? let us come to what I am. Attached by inclination to you from our earlieſt infancy, my heart has been in a manner abſorbed by your's; affectionate and ſuſceptible as I was, I of myſelf was incapable of love or ſenſibility. All my ſentiments came from you; you alone ſtood in the place of the whole world, and I lived only to be your friend. Chaillot ſaw all this, and founded on it the judgement ſhe paſſed on me. In what particular, my dear, have you found her miſtaken?

You know I looked upon your friend as a brother: as the ſon of my mother was the lover of my friend. Neither was it my reaſon, but my heart that gave him this preference. I ſhould have been even more ſuſceptible than I am, had I never experienced any other love. I careſſed you, in careſſing the deareſt part of yourſelf, and the chearfulneſs which attended my embraces was a proof of their purity. For doth a modeſt woman ever behave ſo to the man ſhe loves? did you behave thus to him? No, Eloiſa; love in a female heart is cautious and timid; reſerve and modeſty are all its advances; it diſcloſes by endeavouring to hide itſelf, and whenever it confers the favour of its careſſes, it well knows how to ſet a value upon them. Friendſhip is prodigal, but love is avaricious and ſparing.

I confeſs,

I confeſs, indeed, that too intimate connexions at his age and mine are dangerous; but, with both our hearts engaged by the ſame object, we were ſo accuſtomed to place it between us, that without annihilating you at leaſt, it was impoſſible for us to come together. Even that familiarity, ſo dangerous on every other occaſion, was then my ſecurity. Our ſentiments depend on our ideas, and when theſe have once taken a certain turn, they are not eaſily perverted. We had talked together too much in one ſtrain to begin upon another; we had advanced too far to return back the way we came; love is jealous of its prerogative, and will make its own progreſs; it does not chooſe that friendſhip ſhould meet it half-way. In ſhort, I am ſtill of the ſame opinion, that criminal careſſes never take place between thoſe that have been long uſed to the endearing embraces of innocence. In aid of my ſentiments, came the man deſtined by heaven to conſtitute the momentary happineſs of my life. You know, couſin, he was young, well made, honeſt, complaiſant, and ſollicitous to pleaſe; it is true, he was not ſo great a maſter in love as your friend; but it was me that he loved: and, when the heart is free, the paſſion which is addreſſed to ourſelves hath always in it ſomething contagious. I returned his affections, therefore, with all that remained of mine, and his ſhare was ſuch as left him no room to complain of his choice. With all this, what had I to apprehend?

hend? I will even go ſo far as to confeſs that the prerogatives of the huſband, joined to the duties of a wife, relaxed for a moment the ties of friendſhip; and that after my change of condition, giving myſelf up to the duties of my new ſtation, I became a more affectionate wife than I was a friend: but in returning to you, I have brought back two hearts inſtead of one, and have not ſince forgot that I alone am charged with that double obligation.

What, my dear friend, ſhall I ſay further? At the return of our old preceptor, I had, as it were, a new acquaintance to cultivate: methought I looked upon him with very different eyes; my heart fluttered as he ſaluted me, in a manner I had never felt before; and the more pleaſure that emotion gave me, the more it made me afraid. I was alarmed at a ſentiment which ſeemed criminal, and which perhaps would not have exiſted had it not been innocent. I too plainly perceived that he was not, nor could be any longer your lover; I was too ſenſible that his heart was diſengaged, and that mine was ſo too: You know the reſt, my dear couſin; my fears, my ſcruples were, I ſee, as well known to you as to myſelf. My unexperienced heart was ſo intimidated by ſenſations ſo new to it, that I even reproached myſelf for the earneſt deſire I felt to rejoin you; as if that deſire had not been the ſame before the return of our friend. I was uneaſy that he ſhould be in the very place where I myſelf moſt inclined to be, and believe

I ſhould

I ſhould not have been ſo much diſpleaſed to find myſelf leſs deſirous of it, as at conceiving that it was not entirely on your account. At length, however, I returned to you, and began to recover my confidence. I was leſs aſhamed of my weakneſs after having confeſſed it to you. I was even leſs aſhamed of it in your company: I thought myſelf protected in turn, and ceaſed to be afraid of myſelf. I reſolved, agreeably to your advice, not to change my conduct towards him. Certainly a greater reſerve would have been a kind of declaration, and I was but too likely to let ſlip involuntary ones, to induce me to make any directly. I continued, therefore, to trifle with him through baſhfulneſs, and to treat him familiarly through modeſty: but perhaps all this, not being ſo natural as formerly, was not attended with the ſame propriety, nor exerted to the ſame degree. From being a trifler, I turned a downright fool; and what perhaps increaſed my aſſurance was, I found I could be ſo with impunity. Whether it was your example that inſpired me, or whether it be that Eloiſa refines every thing that approaches her, I found myſelf perfectly tranquil, while nothing remained of my firſt emotions, but the moſt pleaſing, yet peaceful ſenſations, which required nothing more than the tranquillity I poſſeſſed.

Yes, my dear friend, I am as ſuſceptible and affectionate as you; but I am ſo in a different manner. Perhaps, with more lively paſſions,

I am

I am leſs able to govern them, and that very chearfulneſs, which has been ſo fatal to the innocence of others, has preſerved mine. Not that it has been always eaſy, I confeſs; any more than it is to remain a widow at my years, and not be ſometimes ſenſible that the day-time conſtitutes but one half of our lives. Nay, notwithſtanding the grave face you put on the matter, I imagine your caſe does not differ in that greatly from mine. Mirth and pleaſantry may then afford no unſeaſonable relief; and perhaps be a better preſervative than graver leſſons. How many times, in the ſtillneſs of the night, when the heart is all open to itſelf, have I driven impertinent thoughts out of my mind, by ſtudying tricks for the next day! how many times have I not averted the danger of a private converſation by an extravagant fancy! There is always, my dear, when one is weak, a time wherein gaiety becomes ſerious; but that time will not come to me.

Theſe are at leaſt my ſentiments of the matter, and what I am not aſhamed to confeſs in anſwer to your's. I readily confirm all that I ſaid in the *Elyſium*, as to the growing paſſion I perceived, and the happineſs I had enjoyed during the winter. I indulged myſelf freely in the pleaſing reflexions of being always in company with the perſon I loved, while I deſired nothing further; and, if that opportunity had ſubſiſted, I ſhould have coveted no other. My chearfulneſs was the effect of contentment, and not

not of artifice. I turned the pleaſure of converſing with him into drollery, and perceived that in contenting myſelf with laughing, I was not paving the way for future ſorrow.

I could not, indeed, help thinking ſometimes, that my continual playing upon him gave him leſs real diſpleaſure than he affected. The cunning creature was not angry at being offended, and if he was a long time before he could be brought to temper, it was only that he might enjoy the pleaſure of being entreated. Again, I in my turn have frequently laid hold of ſuch occaſions to expreſs a real tenderneſs for him, appearing all the while to make a jeſt of him: ſo that you would have been puzzled to ſay which was the moſt of a child. One day I remember that you was abſent, he was playing at cheſs with your huſband, while I and the little French-woman were diverting ourſelves at ſhuttlecock in the ſame room; I gave her the ſignal, and kept my eye on our philoſopher; who, I found, by the boldneſs of his looks, and the readineſs of his moves, had the beſt of the game. As the table was ſmall, the cheſs-board hung over its edge; I watched my opportunity, therefore, and without ſeeming to deſign it, gave the board a knock with a back-ſtroke of my racquet, and overturned the whole game on the floor. You never in your life ſaw a man in ſuch a paſſion: he was even ſo enraged, that when I gave him his choice of a kiſs or a box on the ear by way of penance, he ſullenly turned

away from me as I preſented him my cheek. I aſked pardon, but to no purpoſe: he was inflexible, and I doubt not that he would have left me on my knees, had I condeſcended to kneel for it. I put an end to his reſentment, however, by another offenſe, which made him forget the former, and we were better friends than ever.

I could never have extricated myſelf ſo well by any other means; and I once perceived that, if our play had become ſerious, it might have proved too much ſo. This was one evening when he played with us that ſimple and affecting duo of Leo's *Vado a morir ben mio*. You ſung indeed with indifference enough: but I did not; for juſt as we came to the moſt pathetick part of the ſong, he leaned forward, and as my hand lay upon the hapſichord, imprinted on it a kiſs, whoſe impreſſion I felt at my heart. I am not very well acquainted with the ardent kiſſes of love! but this I can ſay, that mere friendſhip, not even our's, ever gave or received any thing like that. After ſuch moments, what is the conſequence of reflecting on them in ſolitude, and of bearing them conſtantly in memory? for my part, I was ſo much affected at the time, that I ſung out of tune, and put the muſick out. We went to dancing, I made the philoſopher dance; we eat little or nothing; ſat up very late; and, though I went to bed weary, I only loſed till morning.

I have, therefore, very good reaſon for not laying any reſtraint on my humour, or changing my

my manners. The time that will make ſuch an alteration neceſſary is ſo near that it is not worth while to anticipate it. The time to be prudiſh and reſerved will come but too ſoon. While I am in my twenties, therefore, I ſhall make uſe of my privilege; for when once turned of thirty, people are no longer wild without being ridiculous; and your find-fault of a huſband hath aſſurance enough to tell me already, that I ſhall be allowed but ſix months longer to dreſs a ſallad with my fingers. Patience! to retort his ſarcaſm, however, I tell him I will dreſs it for him in that manner for theſe ſix years to come, and if I do, I proteſt to you he ſhall eat it—but to return from my ramble. If we have not the abſolute command over our ſentiments, we have at leaſt ſome over our conduct. I could, without doubt, have requeſted of heaven a heart more at eaſe; but may I be able to my laſt hour to plead at its dread tribunal a life as innocent as that which I paſſed this winter! in fact, I have nothing in the leaſt to reproach myſelf with, reſpecting the only man in whoſe power it might be to make me criminal. It is not quite the ſame, my dear, ſince his departure: being accuſtomed to think of him in his abſence, I think of him every hour in the day, and, to confeſs the truth, find him more dangerous in idea than in perſon. When he is abſent, I am over head and ears in love; when preſent, I am only whimſical. Let him return, and I ſhall be cured of all my fears. The cha-

grin his abſence gives me, however, is not a little aggravated by my uneaſineſs at his dream. If you have placed all to the account of love, therefore, you are miſtaken; friendſhip has had part in my uneaſineſs. After the departure of our friends, your looks were pale and changed; I expected you every moment to fall ſick. Not that I am credulous: I am only fearful. I know very well that a bad dream does not neceſſarily produce a ſiniſter event; but I am always afraid leſt ſuch an event ſhould ſucceed it. Not one night's reſt could I get for that unlucky dream, till I ſaw you recover your former bloom. Could I have ſuſpected the effects his anxiety would have had on me, without knowing any thing of it, I would certainly have given every thing I had in the world that he ſhould have ſhown himſelf, when he came back ſo much like a fool from Villeneuve.

At length, however, my fears vaniſhed with your ſuſpicious looks; your health and appetite having a greater effect on me than your pleaſantries. The arguments theſe ſuſtained at table againſt my apprehenſions, in time diſſipated them. To increaſe our happineſs our friend is on his return, and I am in every reſpect delighted. His return, ſo far from alarming me, gives me confidence; and as ſoon as we ſee him again, I ſhall fear nothing for your life, nor my repoſe. In the mean time, be careful, dear couſin, of my friend; and be under no apprehenſions for your's; ſhe will take care of herſelf,

ſelf, I will engage for her. And yet I have ſtill a pain at my heart——I feel an oppreſſion which I cannot account for. Ah! my dear, to think that we may one day part for ever! that one may ſurvive the other! how unhappy will ſhe be on whom that lot ſhall fall! ſhe will either remain little worthy to live, or lifeleſs before her death.

You will aſk me, to what purpoſe is all this vain lamentation? You will ſay, Fye on theſe ridiculous terrours! inſtead of talking of death, let us chooſe a more entertaining topick, and talk about your marriage. Your huſband has indeed long entertained ſuch a notion, and perhaps if he had never ſpoken of it to me, it would never have come into my head. I have ſince thought of it now and then, but always with diſdain. It would be abſolutely making an old woman of me; for, if I ſhould have any children by a ſecond marriage, I ſhould certainly conceit myſelf the grandmother of thoſe of the firſt. You are certainly very good to take upon yourſelf ſo readily to ſpare the bluſhes of your friend, and to look upon your taking that trouble as an inſtance of your charitable benevolence. For my own part, nevertheleſs, I can ſee very well that all the reaſons founded on your obliging ſollicitude are not equal to the leaſt of mine againſt a ſecond marriage.

To be ſerious, I am not mean-ſpirited enough to number among thoſe reaſons any reluctance

I ſhould have to break an engagement raſhly made with myſelf, nor the fear of being cenſured for doing my duty, nor an inequality in point of fortune in a circumſtance where that perſon reaps the greateſt honour to whom the other would be obliged for his: but, without repeating what I have ſo often told you concerning my love of independency and natural averſion to the marriage yoke, I will abide by only one objection, and this I draw from thoſe ſacred dictates which nobody in the world pays a greater regard to than yourſelf. Remove this obſtacle, couſin, and I give up the point. Amidſt all thoſe airs of mirth and drollery, which give you ſo much alarm, my conſcience is perfectly eaſy. The rememberance of my huſband excites not a bluſh; I even take pleaſure to think him a witneſs of my innocence; for why ſhould I be afraid to do that now he is dead, which I uſed to do when he was living? but will this be the caſe, Eloiſa, if I ſhould violate thoſe ſacred engagements which united us; if I ſhould ſwear to another that everlaſting love, which I have ſo often ſwore to him; if my divided heart ſhould rob his memory of what it beſtowed on his ſucceſſor, and be incapable without offending one to diſcharge the obligations it owes the other? Will not that form, now ſo pleaſing to my imagination, fill me with horrour and affright? will it not be ever preſent to poiſon my delight? and will not his rememberance, which now conſtitutes the happineſs of my life, be my future torment?

torment? With what face can you adviſe me to take a ſecond huſband, after having vowed never to do the like yourſelf, as if the ſame reaſons which you give me were not as applicable to yourſelf in the ſame circumſtances? They were friends, you ſay, and loved each other. So much the worſe. With what indignation will not his ſhade behold a man who was dear to him uſurp his rights, and ſeduce his wife from her fidelity? In ſhort, though it were true that I owed no obligation to the deceaſed, ſhould I owe none to the dear pledge of his love? and can I believe he would ever have choſen me, had he foreſeen that I ſhould ever have expoſed his only child to ſee herſelf undiſtinguiſhed among the children of another? Another word, and I have done: who told you, pray, that all the obſtacles between us ariſe from me? In anſwering for him, have you not rather conſulted your will than your power? Or, were you certain of his conſent, do you make no ſcruple to offer me a heart exhauſted by a former paſſion? do you think that mine ought to be content with it, and that I might be happy with a man I could not make ſo? think better of it, my dear couſin. Not requiring a greater return of love than I feel, I ſhould not be ſatisfied with leſs, and I am too virtuous a woman to think the pleaſing my huſband a matter of indifference. What ſecurity have you, then, for the completion of your hopes? Is the pleaſure he may take in my company, which may be only the effect of

friendſhip; is that tranſitory delight, which at his age may ariſe only from the difference of ſex: is this, I ſay, a ſufficient foundation? If ſuch pleaſure had produced any laſting ſentiment, is it to be thought he would have been ſo profoundly ſilent, not only to me, but to you, and even to your huſband, by whom an eclairciſſement of that nature could not fail of being favourably received.

Has he ever opened his lips on this head to any one? In all the private converſations I have had with him, he talked of nobody but you. In thoſe which you have had, did he ever ſay any thing of me? How can I imagine that, if he had concealed a ſecret of this kind in his breaſt, I ſhould not have perceived him to be under ſome conſtraint, or that it would not, by ſome indiſcretion or other, have eſcaped him? Nay, ſince his departure, which of us does he moſt frequently mention in his letters? which of us is the ſubject of his dreams? I admire that you ſhould think me ſo tender and ſuſceptible, and ſhould not at the ſame time ſuppoſe my heart would ſuggeſt all this. But I ſee through your device, my ſweet friend; it is only to authoriſe your pretenſions to repriſals, that you charge me with having formerly ſaved my heart at the expenſe of your's. But I am not ſo to be made the dupe of your ſubtility. And ſo here is an end of my confeſſion; which I have made, not to contradict, but to ſet you right; having nothing further to ſay on this head,

head, than to acquaint you with my reſolution. You now know my heart as well, if not better, than I do. My honour, my happineſs, are equally dear to you as to myſelf; and, in the preſent tranquillity of your paſſions, you will be the beſt able to judge of the means to ſecure both the one and the other. Take my conduct, therefore, under your direction. I ſubmit it entirely to you. Let us return to our natural ſtate, and reciprocally change our employment; we ſhall both do the better for it: do you govern, and you ſhall find me tractable: let it be your place to direct what I ſhould do, and it ſhall be mine to follow your directions.

Take my heart, and encloſe it up in your's; what buſineſs have inſeparables for two? But to return to our travellers; though, to ſay the truth, I have already ſaid ſo much about one, that I hardly dare ſpeak a word about the other, for fear you ſhould remark too great a difference in my ſtile, and that even my friendſhip for the generous Engliſhman ſhould betray too much regard for the amiable Swiſs. Beſides, what can I ſay about letters I have not ſeen? you ought at leaſt to ſend me that of Lord B——. But you durſt not ſend it without the other. It is very well. You might, however, have done better. Well, recommend me to your duennas of twenty: they are infinitely more tractable than thoſe of thirty.

I muſt revenge myſelf, however, by informing you of the effect of your fine reſerve. It has only

made me imagine the letter in queſtion, that letter which breathes ſuch a tender—only a hundred times more tender than it probably is. Out of ſpite I take pleaſure in conceiving it filled with ſoft expreſſions which cannot be in it; ſo that if I am not paſſionately admired, I ſhall make you ſuffer for it. After all, I cannot ſee with what face you can talk to me of the Italian poſt. You prove in your letter that I was not in the wrong to wait for it, but for not having waited long enough. Had I ſtaid but one poor quarter of an hour longer, I ſhould have met the packet, have laid hold of it firſt, and read it at my eaſe. It had then been my turn to make a merit of giving it you. But ſince the grapes are ſo ſour, you may keep the letters. I have two others, which I would not change for them were they better worth reading than I imagine they are. There is that of Harriet, I can aſſure you, even exceeds your own; nor have either you or I, in all our lives, ever wrote any thing ſo pretty. And yet you give yourſelf airs forſooth of treating this prodigy as a little impertinent. Upon my word, I ſuſpect that to ariſe from mere envy; and, ſince I have diſcovered in her this new talent, I purpoſe, before you ſpoil her writings as you have done her ſpeech, to eſtabliſh between her apartment and mine an Italian poſt, from whence I will have no pilfering of packets.

Farewell, my dear friend, you will find encloſed the anſwers to your letters, which will give you no mean idea of my intereſt here. I

would

would write to you ſomething about this country and its inhabitants; but it is high time to put an end to this volume of a letter. You have beſides quite perplexed me with your ſtrange fancies. As we have five or ſix days longer to ſtay here, and I ſhall have time to give another look at what I have already ſeen, you will be no loſer by the delay; and you may depend on my tranſmitting you another volume as big as this, before my departure.

LETTER CLIII.

LORD B—— TO MR. WOLMAR.

NO! my dear Wolmar, you were not miſtaken: St. Preux is to be depended on; but I am not; and I have paid dear for the experience that hath convinced me of it. Without his aſſiſtance I ſhould have been a dupe to the very proof to which I put his fidelity. You know that, to ſatisfy his notions of gratitude, and divert his mind with new objects, I pretended that my journey to Italy was of greater importance than it really was. To bid a final adieu to the attachment of my youth, and bring back a friend perfectly cured of his, were the fruits I promiſed myſelf from the voyage. I informed you that his dream at Villeneuve gave me ſome uneaſineſs for him. That dream made me even ſuſpect the motives of his tranſport, on being told that you had choſen him

preceptor to your children, and that he ſhould paſs the remainder of his life with you. The better to obſerve the effuſions of his heart, I had at firſt removed all difficulties, by declaring my intention of ſettling alſo in your part of the world; and thus I prevented any of thoſe objections his friendſhip might have made on account of leaving me. A change in my reſolutions, however, made me ſoon alter my tale.

He had not ſeen the Marchioneſs thrice, before we were both agreed in our opinion of her. Unfortunate woman! poſſeſſed of noble qualities, but without virtue! her ardent, ſincere paſſion at firſt affected me, and nouriſhed mine; but her paſſion was tinged with the blackneſs of her ſoul, and inſpired me in the end with horrour. When he had ſeen Laura, and knew her diſpoſition, her beauty, her wit, and unexampled attachment, I formed a reſolution to make uſe of her to acquire a perfect knowledge of the ſituation of St Preux. If I marry Laura, ſaid I to him, it is not my intention to carry her to London, where ſhe may be known; but to a place, where virtue is reſpected in whomſoever it is found: you will there diſcharge your duty of preceptor, and we ſhall ſtill continue to live together. If I do not marry her, it is time for me, however, to think of ſettling. You know my houſe in Oxfordſhire, and will make your choice, either to take upon you the education of Mr. Wolmar's children, or to accompany me in my retirement. To this he made

me

me juſt ſuch an anſwer as I expected; but I had a mind to obſerve his conduct. If, in order to ſpend his time at Clarens, he had promoted a marriage which he ought to have oppoſed, or, on the contrary, preferred the honour of his friend to his own happineſs; in either caſe, I ſay, the experiment anſwered my end, and I knew what to think of the ſituation of his heart.

On trial, I found him to be ſuch as I wiſhed; firmly reſolved againſt the project I pretended to have formed, and ready with all his arguments to oppoſe it; but I was continually in her company, and was moved by her tenderneſs and affection. My heart, totally diſengaged from the Marchioneſs, began to fix itſelf on her rival, by this conſtant intercourſe. The ſentiments of Laura increaſed the attachment ſhe had before inſpired; and I began to be aſhamed of ſacrificing to that prejudice I deſpiſed the eſteem which I was ſo well convinced was due to her merit; I began even to be in doubt, whether I had not laid myſelf under ſome obligation to do that merit juſtice, by the hopes I had given her, if not in words, at leaſt by my actions. Though I never promiſed her any thing, yet to have kept her in ſuſpenſe and expectation for nothing would be to deceive her; and I could not help thinking ſuch a deception extremely cruel. In ſhort, annexing a kind of duty to my inclination, and conſulting happineſs more than reputation, I attempted to reconcile my paſſion to

reaſon,

reaſon, and reſolved to carry my pretended ſcheme as far as it would go, and even to execute it in reality, if I could not recede without injuſtice. After ſome time, however, I began to be more uneaſy on account of St. Preux, as he did not appear to act the part he had undertaken with that zeal I expected. Indeed, he oppoſed my profeſſed deſign of marriage, but took little pains to check my growing inclination; ſpeaking to me of Laura in ſuch a ſtrain of encomium as, at the ſame time that he appeared to diſſuade me from marrying her, added fuel to the flame, by increaſing my affection. This inconſiſtency gave me ſome alarm: I did not think him ſo ſteady as before. He ſeemed ſhy of directly oppoſing my ſentiments, gave way to my arguments, was fearful of giving offenſe, and indeed ſeemed to have loſt all that intrepidity in doing his duty, which the true paſſion for it inſpires. Some other obſervations which I made alſo increaſed my diſtruſt. I found out that he viſited Laura unknown to me; and that, by their frequent ſigns, there was a ſecret underſtanding between them. On her part, the proſpect of being united to the man ſhe loved ſeemed to give her no pleaſure; I obſerved in her the ſame degree of tenderneſs, indeed, but that tenderneſs was no longer mixed with joy at my approach; a gloomy ſadneſs perpetually clouding her features. Nay, ſometimes, in the tendereſt part of our converſations, I have caught her caſting a ſide glance on St. Preux, on which a tear

a tear would often ſteal ſilently down her cheek, which ſhe endeavoured to conceal from me. In ſhort, they carried the matter ſo far, that I was at laſt greatly perplexed. What could I think? It is impoſſible (ſaid I to myſelf) that I can all this while have been cheriſhing a ſerpent in my boſom? How far have I not reaſon to extend my ſuſpicions, and return thoſe he formerly entertained of me? Weak and unhappy as we are, our misfortunes are generally of our own ſeeking! why do we complain that bad men torment us, while the good are ſo ingenious at tormenting each other! All this operated but to induce me to come to a determination. For, though I was ignorant of the bottom of their intrigue, I ſaw the heart of Laura was ſtill the ſame; and that proof of her affection endeared her to me the more. I propoſed to come to an explanation with her before I put an end to the affair; but I was deſirous of putting it off till the laſt moment, in order to get all the light I could poſſibly before-hand. As for St. Preux, I was reſolved to convince myſelf, to convince him, and in ſhort to come at the truth of the matter before I took any ſtep in regard to him, for it was eaſy to ſuppoſe that an infallible rupture muſt happen, and I was unwilling to place a good diſpoſition, and a reputation of twenty years ſtanding, in the balance againſt mere ſuſpicions.

The Marchioneſs was not ignorant of what paſſed; having her ſpies in the convent where

Laura

Laura reſides, who informed her of the report of her marriage. Nothing more was neceſſary to excite her rage. She wrote me threatening letters; nay, ſhe went farther; but, as it was not the firſt time ſhe had done ſo, and we were on our guard, her attempts were fruitleſs. I had only the pleaſure to ſee that our friend did not ſpare himſelf on this occaſion; nor make any ſcruple to expoſe his own life to ſave that of his friend.

Overcome by the tranſports of her paſſion, the Marchioneſs fell ſick, and was ſoon paſt recovery; putting at once an end to her misfortunes and her guilt*. I could not help being afflicted to hear of her illneſs, and ſent Doctor Eſwin to give her all the aſſiſtance in his power, as a phyſician. St. Preux went alſo to viſit her in my behalf; but ſhe would neither ſee one nor the other. She would not even bear to hear me named during her illneſs, and inveighed againſt me with the moſt horrid imprecations every time I was mentioned. I was grieved at heart for her ſituation, and felt my wounds ready to bleed afreſh; reaſon, however, ſupported my ſpirits and reſolution, but I ſhould have been one of the worſt of men to think of marriage, while a woman ſo dear to me lay in that extremity. In the mean time our friend, fearing I ſhould not be able to reſiſt the ſtrong inclination.

* By a letter not publiſhed in this collection, it appears that Lord B—— was of opinion, that the ſouls of the wicked are annihilated in death.

clination I had to ſee her, propoſed a journey to Naples; to which I conſented.

The ſecond day after our arrival there, he came into my chamber with a fixed and grave countenance, holding a letter in his hand, which he ſeemed to have juſt received. I ſtarted up, and cried out, "The Marchioneſs is dead!"—"Would to God (ſaid he coldly) ſhe were! it were better not to exiſt, than to exiſt only to do evil; but it is not of her I bring you news; though what I bring concerns you nearly: be pleaſed, my lord, to give me an uninterrupted hearing." I was ſilent, and thus he began:—

"In honouring me with the ſacred name of friend, you taught me how to deſerve it. I have acquitted myſelf of the charge you entruſted with me, and ſeeing you ready to forget yourſelf, have ventured to aſſiſt your memory. I ſaw you unable to break one connexion but by entering into another; both equally unworthy of you. Had an unequal marriage been the only point in queſtion, I ſhould only have reminded you, that you was a peer of England, and adviſed you either to renounce all pretenſions to publick honour, or to reſpect publick opinion. But a marriage ſo ſcandalous! can you? no, my lord, you will not make ſo unworthy a choice. It is not enough that your wife ſhould be virtuous, her reputation ſhould be unſtained. ——Believe me, a wife for Lord B—— is not

eaſily to be found. Read that, my lord, and ſee what I have done."

He then gave me a letter. It was from Laura. I opened it with emotion, and read as follows:—

"My Lord,

"LOVE at length prevailed, and you were "willing to marry me: but I am content. Your "friend has pointed out my duty, and I per- "form it without regret: In diſhonouring you, "I ſhould have lived unhappily; in leaving your "honour unſtained, methinks I partake of it. "The ſacrifice of my felicity to a duty ſo "ſevere makes me forget even the ſhame of my "youth. Farewell! from this moment I am no "longer in your power or my own. Farewell, "my lord, for ever! purſue me not in my re- "treat to deſpair; but hear my laſt requeſt: Con- "fer not on any other woman that honour I "could not accept. There was but one heart "in the world made for your's; and it was "that of

"LAURA."

The agitation of mind I was in, on reading this letter, prevented me from ſpeaking. He took the advantage of my ſilence, to tell me that after my departure ſhe had taken the veil in the convent where ſhe boarded; that the court of Rome being informed ſhe was going to be married to a Lutheran, had given orders to pre-

vent

vent his ſeeing her; and confeſſed to me frankly, that he had taken all theſe meaſures in concert with herſelf. "I did not oppoſe your deſigns (continued he) with all the power I might; fearing your return to the Marchioneſs, and being deſirous of combating your old paſſion by that which you entertained for Laura. In ſeeing you run greater lengths than I intended, I applied to your underſtanding: but having from my own experience but too juſt reaſon to diſtruſt the power of argument, I ſounded the heart of Laura; and finding in it all that generoſity which is inſeparable from true love, I prevailed on her to make this ſacrifice. The aſſurance of being no longer the object of your contempt inſpired her with a fortitude which renders her the more worthy of your eſteem. She has done her duty, you muſt now do your's."

Then eagerly embracing and preſſing me to his heart, "I read (ſays he) in our common deſtiny thoſe laws which heaven dictates to both, and requires us to obey. The empire of love is at an end, and that of friendſhip begins: my heart attends only to its ſacred call, it knows no other tie than that which unites me to you. Fix on whatever place of reſidence you pleaſe, Clarens, Oxford, London, Paris, or Rome; it is equal to me, ſo we but live together. Go whither you will, ſeek an aſylum wherever you think fit, I will follow you throughout the world: for I ſolemnly proteſt, in the face of the living

living God, that I will never leave you till death."

I was greatly affected at the zeal and affection of this young man; his eyes ſparkling with pleaſure on this effuſion of his heart. I forgot at once both the Marchioneſs and Laura. Is there, indeed, any thing in the world to be regretted, while one preſerves ſo dear a friend? Indeed, I was now fully convinced, by the part he ſo readily took on this occaſion, that he was entirely cured of his ancient paſſion: and that the pains you had taken were not thrown away upon him. In ſhort, I could not doubt, by the ſolemn engagement he had thus voluntarily made, that his attachment to me was truely ſincere; and that his virtue had entirely got the better of his inclinations. I can therefore bring him back with confidence. Yes, my dear Wolmar, he is worthy to educate youth; and what is more, of being received into your houſe.

A few days after, I received an account of the death of the Marchioneſs; at which I was but little affected, as ſhe had indeed been long dead in reſpect to me. I had hitherto regarded marriage as a debt, which every man contracts at the time of his birth with his country and mankind; for which reaſon, I had reſolved to marry, the leſs out of inclination than duty; but I am now of another opinion. The obligation to marriage, I now conceive, is not ſo univerſal, but that it depends on the rank and ſituation which every man holds in life. Celibacy is, doubtleſs,

leſs, wrong in the common people, ſuch as manufacturers, huſbandmen, and others, who are really uſeful and neceſſary to the ſtate. But for thoſe ſuperior orders of men, who compoſe the legiſlature and the magiſtracy, to which every other aſpires, and which are always ſufficiently ſupplied, it is both lawful and expedient. For were the rich all obliged to marry, the increaſe of number among thoſe ſubjects which are a dead weight on the ſtate would only tend to its depopulation. Mankind will always find maſters enough, and England will ſooner want labourers than peers.

I think myſelf at full liberty, therefore, in the rank to which I was born, to indulge my own inclination in this reſpect. At my age, it is too late to think of repairing the ſhocks my heart hath ſuſtained from love. I ſhall devote my future hours therefore to friendſhip, the pleaſures of which I can no where cultivate ſo well as at Clarens. I accept, therefore, your obliging offers, on ſuch conditions as my fortune ought to add to your's, that it may not be uſeleſs to me. Beſides, after the engagements St. Preux hath entered into, I know no other method of detaining him with you, but by reſiding with you myſelf; and if ever he grows tired or troubleſome, it will be ſufficient for me to leave you, to make him follow. The only embarraſſment I ſhall in this caſe lie under reſpects my cuſtomary voyages to England; for though I have no longer any intereſt in the Houſe of Peers, yet, while I am one

one of the number, I think it neceſſary I ſhould continue to do my duty as ſuch. But I have a faithful friend among my brother peers, whom I can empower to anſwer for me in ordinary caſes; and on extraordinary occaſions, wherein I think it my duty to go over in perſon, I can take my pupil along with me; and even he, his pupils with him, when they grow a little bigger, and you can prevail on yourſelf to truſt them with us. Such voyages cannot fail of being uſeful to them, and will not be ſo very long as to make their abſence afflicting to their mother.

I have not ſhown this letter to St. Preux, nor do I deſire you ſhould ſhow every part of it to the ladies; it is proper that my ſcheme to ſound the heart of our friend ſhould be known only to you and me. I would not have you conceal any thing from them, however, that may do honour to this worthy youth, even though it ſhould be diſcovered at my expenſe; but I muſt here take my leave.

I have ſent the deſigns and drawings for my pavillion, for you to reform, alter, and amend, as you pleaſe; but I would have you to execute them immediately, if poſſible. I would have ſtruck out the muſick room; for I have now loſt almoſt all pretenſions to taſte, and am careleſs of amuſement: at the requeſt of St. Preux, however, I have left it, as he propoſes now and then to exerciſe your children there. You will receive alſo ſome few books, to add to your library. But what novelty will you find in books?

No, my dear Wolmar, you only want to underſtand that of nature, to be the wiſeſt of men.

LETTER CLIV.

ANSWER.

I Was impatient, my dear B——, to come to the end of your adventures. It ſeemed very ſtrange to me, that, after having ſo long reſiſted the force of your inclinations, you had waited only for a friend to aſſiſt you to give way to them: though, to ſay truth, we find ourſelves often more weak when ſupported by others, than when we rely ſolely on our own ſtrength. I confeſs, however, I was greatly alarmed by your laſt letter, when you told me your marriage with Laura was a thing abſolutely determined. Not but that, in ſpite of this aſſurance, I ſtill entertained ſome doubts of the event; and if my ſuſpicions had been diſappointed, I would never have ſeen St. Preux again. As it is, you have both acted as I flattered myſelf you would, and have ſo fully juſtified the good opinion I had of you, that I ſhall be delighted whenever you think proper to return, and ſettle here agreeably to the deſign we had planned. Come, ye uncommon friends! come to increaſe and partake of the happineſs we here enjoy. However flattering may be the hopes of thoſe who believe in a future ſtate, for my part I had rather enjoy the preſent in their company; nay,

I perceive

I perceive you are both more agreeable to me with the tenets you poſſeſs, than you would be if unhappy enough to think as I do.

As to St. Preux, you know what were my ſentiments of him at your departure: there was no need to make any experiment on his heart to ſettle my judgement concerning him. My proof had been before made, and I thought I knew him as well as it was poſſible for one man to know another. I had, beſides, more than one reaſon to place a confidence in him; and was more ſecure of him than he was of himſelf. For though he ſeems to have followed your example in renouncing matrimony, you will perhaps find reaſon here to prevail on him to change his ſyſtem. But I will explain myſelf further on this head when I ſee you.

With reſpect to yourſelf, I think your ſentiments on celibacy quite new and refined. They may, for aught I know, be judicious alſo, when applied to political inſtitutions, intended to balance and keep in æquilibrio the relative powers of ſtates; but I am in doubt, whether they are not more ſubtle than ſolid, when applied to diſpenſe with the obligations that individuals lie under to the laws of nature. It ſeems to me that life is a bleſſing we receive on condition of tranſmitting it to our ſucceſſors: a kind of tenure which ought to paſs from generation to generation; and that every one who had a father is indiſpenſibly obliged to become one. Such has been hitherto your opinion alſo; it was

one of your motives for going to Italy: but I know from whence you derive your new ſyſtem of philoſophy; there is an argument in Laura's letter, which your heart knows not how to invalidate.

Our ſprightly couſin has been for theſe eight or ten days paſt at Geneva, with her relations, on family affairs: but we daily expect her to return. I have told my wife as much as was expedient ſhe ſhould know of your letter. We had learnt of Mr. Miol, that your marriage was broken off; but ſhe was ignorant of the part St. Preux had in that event: and you may be aſſured it will give her great pleaſure to be informed of all he has done to merit your beneficence, and juſtify your eſteem. I have ſhown her the plan and deſigns for your pavillion, in which ſhe thinks there is much taſte. We propoſe to make ſome little alterations, however, as the ground requires; which, as they will make your lodging the more convenient, we doubt not you will approve.

We wait, nevertheleſs, for the ſanction of Clara, before we reſolve; for without her, you know, there is nothing to be done here. In the mean time, I have ſet the people to work, and hope to have the maſonry pretty forward before winter.

I am obliged to you for your book; but I no longer read thoſe I am maſter of, and it is too late in life for me to begin to ſtudy thoſe I do not underſtand. I am, however, not quite

ſo ignorant as you would make me. The only volume of nature's works which I read, is the heart of man; of my abilities for comprehending which my friendſhip for you is a ſufficient proof.

LETTER CLV.

MRS. ORBE TO MRS. WOLMAR.

MY ſtay here, my dear couſin, gives me a world of anxieties; the worſt of all which is, that the agreeableneſs of the place would induce me to ſtay longer. The city is delightful, its inhabitants hoſpitable, and their manners courteous; while liberty, which I love of all things, ſeems to have taken refuge amongſt them. The more I know of this little ſtate, the more I find an attachment to one's country agreeable; and pity thoſe who, pretending to call themſelves of this or that country, have no attachment to any. For my part, I perceive that, if I had been born in this, I ſhould have had truely a Roman ſoul. As it is, I dare not, however, pretend to ſay that,

Rome is no more at Rome, but where I dwell.

For I am afraid you will be malicious enough to think the contrary. But why need we talk always about Rome, and Rome? the ſubject of this letter ſhall be Geneva. I ſhall ſay nothing about the face of the country; it is much like our's, except that it is leſs mountainous, and more rural. I ſhall alſo ſay nothing about the government;

government; my good father will, doubtleſs, give you enough of it; as he is employed here all day long, in the fullneſs of his heart, talking politicks with the magiſtrates: and I find him not a little mortified that the Gazette ſo ſeldom makes mention of Geneva. You may judge of the tediouſneſs of their converſation, by the length of my letters; for, when I am wearied with their diſcourſe, I leave them, and, in order to divert myſelf, am tireſome to you. All I remember of their long conferences is, that they hold in high eſteem the great good ſenſe which prevails in this city. When we regard, indeed, the mutual action and re-action of all parts of the ſtate, which afford a reciprocal balance to each other, it is not to be doubted that there are greater abilities employed in the government of this little republick than in that of ſome great kingdoms, where every thing ſupports itſelf by its own proper ſtrength; and the reins of adminiſtration may be thrown into the hands of a blockhead, without any danger to the conſtitution. I can aſſure you, this is not the caſe here. I never hear any body talk to my father about the famous miniſters of great courts, without thinking of the wretched muſician, who thundered away upon our great organ at Lauſanne, and thought himſelf a prodigious able hand, becauſe he made a great noiſe. The people here have only a little ſpinnet, but in general they make good harmony, though the inſtrument be now and then a little out of tune.

Neither ſhall I ſay any thing about——but with telling you what I ſhall not ſay, I ſhall never have done. To begin then with ſomething, that I may ſooner come to a concluſion: Of all people in the world thoſe of Geneva are the moſt eaſily known and characteriſed. Their manners, and even their vices, are mixed with a certain frankneſs peculiar to themſelves. They are conſcious of their natural goodneſs of heart, and that makes them not afraid to appear ſuch as they are. They have generoſity, ſenſe, and penetration; but they are apt to love money too well; a fault which I attribute to their ſituation and circumſtances, which make it ſo neceſſary; the territory of this ſtate not producing a ſufficient nouriſhment for its inhabitants. Hence it happens that the natives of Geneva, who are ſcattered up and down Europe to make their fortunes, copy the airs of foreigners; and, having adopted the vices of the countries where they have lived, bring them home in triumph with their wealth*. Thus the luxury of other nations makes them deſpiſe the ſimplicity of their own; its ſpirit and liberty appear ignoble, and they forge themſelves chains of gold, not as marks of ſlavery, but as ornaments of pride.

But what have I to do with theſe confounded politicks? Indeed, here I am ſtunned with them, and have them conſtantly rung in my ears. I hear

* At preſent they do not take the trouble to ſeek the vices of foreigners: the latter are ready enough to bring them.

hear nothing elſe talked of; unleſs when my father is abſent, which never happens except when the poſt arrives. It is ourſelves, my dear, nevertheleſs, that infect every place we go to; for, as to the converſation of the people, it is generally uſeful and agreeable; indeed, there is little to be learned even from books, which may not here be acquired by converſation. The manners of the Engliſh have reached as far as this country; and the men, living more ſeparate from the women than in our's, contract among themſelves a graver turn, and have more ſolidity in their diſcourſe. This advantage is attended, nevertheleſs, with an inconvenience that is very ſoon experienced. They are extremely prolix, formal, ſententious, and argumentative. Inſtead of writing like Frenchmen, as they ſpeak, they, on the contrary, ſpeak as they write. They declaim inſtead of talking; and one thinks they are always going to ſupport a theſis. They divide their diſcourſe into chapters and ſections, and take the ſame method in their converſation as they do in their books. They ſpeak as if they were reading, ſtrictly obſerving etymological diſtinctions, and pronouncing their words exactly as they are ſpelt: in ſhort, their converſations conſiſt of harangues, and they prattle as if they were preaching.

But what is the moſt ſingular is, that, with this dogmatical and frigid air in their diſcourſe, they are lively, impetuous, and betray ſtrong paſſions; nay, they would expreſs themſelves

well enough upon ſentimental ſubjects, if they were not too particular in words, or knew how to addreſs the heart. But their periods and their commas are inſupportable; and they deſcribe ſo compoſedly the moſt violent paſſions, that, when they have done, one looks about one, to ſee who is affected.

In the mean time, I muſt confeſs I am bribed a little to think well of their hearts, and to believe they are not altogether void of taſte. For you muſt know as a ſecret, that a very pretty gentleman for a huſband, and, as they ſay, very rich, hath honoured me with his regards; and I have more gratitude and politeneſs than to call in queſtion what he has told me. Had he but come eighteen months ſooner, what pleaſure ſhould I have taken in having a ſovereign for my ſlave, and in turning the head of a noble lord! but at preſent mine is not clear enough to make that ſport agreeable.

But to return to that taſte for reading which makes the people of Geneva think. It extends to all ranks and degrees amongſt them, and is of advantage to all. The French read a great deal; but they read only new books; or rather they run them over, leſs for the ſake of knowing what they contain, than to have it to ſay they have read them. On the contrary, the readers at Geneva peruſe only books of merit; they read, and digeſt what they read; making it their buſineſs to underſtand, not to criticiſe upon them. Criticiſms and the choice of books

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are made at Paris; while choice books are almoſt the only ones that are read at Geneva. By this means, their reading has leſs variety and is more profitable. The women, on their part, employ a good deal of their time alſo in reading*; and their converſation is affected by it, but in a different manner. The fine ladies are affected, and ſet up for wits here, as well as with us. Nay, the petty citizens themſelves learn from their books a kind of methodical chit-chat, a choice of words which one is ſurpriſed to hear from them, as we are ſometimes with a prattle of forward children. They muſt unite all the good ſenſe of the men, all the ſprightlineſs of the women, and all the wit common to both; or the former will appear a little pedantick, and the latter prudiſh.

As I was looking out of my window yeſterday, I overheard two tradeſmen's daughters, both very pretty, talking together in a manner ſprightly enough to attract my attention. I liſtened, and heard one of them propoſe to the other, laughing, to write a journal of their tranſactions. "Yes (replied the other immediately) a journal of a morning, and a comment at night." What ſay you, couſin? I know not if this be the ſtyle of tradeſmen's daughters; but I know one muſt be taken up greatly, indeed, not to be able, during the whole day, to make more than a

* It is to be remembered that theſe letters were written ſome years ago; a circumſtance, I am afraid, that will be often ſuggeſted to the reader.

comment on what has paſſed. I fancy this laſs had read the Arabian Nights Entertainments.

Thus, with a ſtyle a little elevated, the women of Geneva are lively and ſatirical; and one ſees here the effect of the nobler paſſions, as much as in any city in the world. Even in the ſimplicity of their dreſs there is taſte; they are graceful alſo in their manners, and agreeable in converſation. As the men are leſs gallant than affectionate, the women are leſs coquettiſh than tender; their ſuſceptibility gives, even to the moſt virtuous among them, an agreeable and refined turn, which reaches the heart, and thence deduces all its refinement. So long as the ladies of Geneva preſerve their own manners, they will be the moſt amiable women in Europe; but they are in danger of being ſoon all Frenchified, and then Frenchwomen will be more agreeable than they.

Thus, every thing goes to ruin, when manners grow corrupted. Even taſte depends on morals, and diſappears with them; giving way to affected and pompous pretenſions, that have no other foundation than faſhion. True wit alſo lies nearly under the ſame circumſtances. Is it not the modeſty of our ſex that obliges us to make uſe of addreſs to reſiſt the arts of men: and, if they are reduced to make uſe of artifice to excite our attention, have we leſs occaſion for ingenuity to ſeem not to underſtand them? Is it not the men who ſet our tongues and wits at liberty; who make us ſo keen at repartee, and oblige us to

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turn their perſons and pretenſions into ridicule? You may ſay what you will, but I maintain it, that a certain coquettiſh air and malicious raillery confounds a gallant much more than ſilence or contempt. What pleaſure have I not taken in ſeeing a diſcontented Celadon bluſh, ſtammer, and loſe himſelf at every word; while the ſhafts of ridicule, leſs flaming, but more pointed than thoſe of love, flew about him like hail? in ſeeing him ſhot him through and through with icicles, whoſe coldneſs added to the ſmart of the wounds! Even you yourſelf, who never loved to give pain, do you believe your mild and ingenuous behaviour, your timid, gentle looks conceal leſs roguery and art than my hoydening? Upon my word, my dear, I much doubt, with all your hypocritical airs, if an account were taken of all the lovers you and I have made fools of, whether your's would not be the longer liſt. I cannot help laughing every time I think of that poor Conflans, who came to me in ſuch a paſſion, to reproach you with having too great a regard for him. "She is ſo obliging to me (ſays he) that I know not what to complain of, and declines my pretenſions with ſo much good ſenſe, that I am aſhamed of finding myſelf ſo unable to reply to her arguments; in ſhort, ſhe is ſo much my friend, that I find myſelf incapable of ſupporting the character of her lover."

But to return to my ſubject. I believe there is no place in the world where married people agree better, and are better managers, than in

this city: here a domeſtick life is peaceful and agreeable; the huſbands are in general obliging, and the wives almoſt Eloiſas. Here your ſyſtem really exiſts. The two ſexes employ and amuſe themſelves ſo differently, that they are never tired with each other's cuſtoms and company, but meet again with redoubled pleaſure. This heightens the enjoyment of the wife; abſtinence from what we delight in is a tenet of your philoſophy; it is, indeed, the epicureiſm of reaſon.

But, unhappily, this ancient modeſty begins a little to decline. The ſexes begin to aſſociate more frequently, they approach in perſon and their hearts recede. It is here as with us, every thing is a mixture of good and bad, but in different proportions. The virtues of the natives of this country are of its own production; their vices are exotick. They are great travellers, and eaſily adopt the cuſtoms and manners of other nations; they ſpeak other languages with facility, and learn without difficulty their proper accent, nevertheleſs, they have a diſagreeable drawling tone in the pronunciation of their own, particularly among the women, who travel but little. More humbled by their inſignificance, than proud of their liberty, they ſeem among foreigners to be aſhamed of their country, and are therefore in a hurry, as one may ſay, to naturaliſe themſelves in that where they happen to reſide; and perhaps the character they have of being avaricious and ſelfiſh, contributes

contributes not a little to this falſe ſhame. It would be better, without doubt, to wipe off the ſtain by a diſintereſted example, than to ſcandaliſe their fellow-citizens by being aſhamed of their country. But they deſpiſe the place of their nativity, even while they render it eſtimable and are ſtill more in the wrong not to give their city the honour of their own perſonal merit.

And yet, however avaricious they may be, they are not accuſed of amaſſing fortunes by low and ſervile means: they ſeldom attach themſelves to the great, or dance attendance at courts; perſonal ſlavery being as odious to them as that of the community. Pliant and flexible as Alcibiades, they are equally impatient of ſervitude; and though they adopt the cuſtoms of other nations, they imitate the people without being ſlaves to the prince. They are chiefly employed in trade, becauſe that is the ſureſt road to wealth, conſiſtent with liberty.

And this great object of their wiſhes makes them often bury the talents with which they are prodigally endowed by nature. This brings me back to the beginning of my letter. They have ingenuity and courage, are lively and penetrating, nor is there any thing virtuous or great which ſurpaſſes their comprehenſion and abilities. But, more paſſionately fond of money than of honour, in order to live in abundance they die in obſcurity, and the only example they leave to their children is the love of thoſe treaſures which for their ſakes they have amaſſed.

I learn all this from the natives themſelves; for they ſpeak of their own characters very impartially.

For my part, I know not what they may be abroad, but at home they are an agreeable people: and I know but one way to quit Geneva without regret. Do you know, couſin, what this is? You may affect as much ignorance and humility as you pleaſe; if you ſhould ſay you have not already gueſſed, you certainly would tell a fib. The day after to-morrow our jovial company will embark in a pretty little ſhip, fitted out for the occaſion; for we chooſe to return by water, on account of the pleaſantneſs of the ſeaſon, and that we may be all together. We purpoſe to paſs the firſt night at Morges, to be the next day at Lauſanne, on account of the marriage ceremony, and the day following to be at —— you know where. When you ſee at a diſtance the flags flying, the torches flaming, and hear the cannon roar; I charge you ſcud about the houſe like a mad thing, and call the whole family to arms! to arms! the enemy! the enemy is coming!

P. S.—Although the diſtribution of the apartments inconteſtibly belongs to me as houſekeeper, I will give it up to you on this occaſion, inſiſting only that my father be placed in thoſe of Lord B——, on account of his charts and maps; with which I deſire it may be completely hung from the ceiling to the floor.

LETTER

LETTER CLVI.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR.

HOW delightful are my ſenſations in beginning this letter! It is the firſt time in my life that I ever wrote to you without fear or ſhame! I am proud of the friendſhip which now ſubſiſts between us, as it is the fruit of an unparalleled conqueſt over a fatal paſſion—a paſſion which may ſometimes be overcome, but is very rarely refined into friendſhip. To relinquiſh that which was once dear to us when honour requires it may be effected by the efforts of ordinary minds; but to have been what we once were to each other, and to become what we now are, this is a triumph indeed. The motive for ceaſing to love may poſſibly be a vicious one; but that which converts the moſt tender paſſion into a ſincere friendſhip cannot be equivocal: it muſt be virtuous. But ſhould we ever have arrived at this of ourſelves? Never, never, my good friend; it had been raſhneſs to attempt it. To avoid each other was the firſt article of our duty, and which nothing ſhould have prevented us from performing. We might without doubt have continued our mutual eſteem; but we muſt have ceaſed to write, or to converſe. All thoughts of each other muſt have been ſuppreſſed, and the greateſt regard we could have reciprocally ſhown had been to break off all correſpondence.

Inſtead of that, let us conſider our preſent ſituation: can there be on earth a more agreeable

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one, and do we not reap a thouſand times a day the reward of our ſelf-denial! To ſee, to love each other, to be ſenſible of our bliſs, to paſs our days together in fraternal intimacy and peaceful innocence; to think of each other without remorſe, to ſpeak without bluſhing; to do honour to that attachment for which we have been ſo often reproached; this is the point at which we are at laſt arrived. O my friend! how far in the career of honour have we already run! let us reſolve to perſevere, and finiſh our race as we have begun.

To whom are we indebted for ſuch extraordinary happineſs? You cannot be ignorant: you know it well. I have ſeen your ſuſceptible heart overflow with gratitude at the goodneſs of the beſt of men, to whom both you and I have been ſo greatly obliged: a goodneſs that does not lay us under freſh obligations, but only renders thoſe more dear which were before ſacred. The only way to acknowledge his favours is to merit them; for the only value he ſets on them conſiſts in their emolument to us. Let us then reward our benefactor by our virtue; for this is all he requires, and, therefore, all we owe him. He will be ſatisfied with us and with himſelf, in having reſtored us to our reaſon.

But, permit me to lay before you a picture of your future ſituation, that you may yourſelf examine it, and ſee if there be any thing in it to make you apprehenſive of danger: Yes, worthy youth, if you reſpect the cauſe of virtue,

attend

attend with a chaſte ear to the councils of your friend. I tremble to enter upon a ſubject in which I am ſorry to engage; but how ſhall I be ſilent without betraying my friend? Will it not be too ſafe to warn you of the danger when you are already entangled in the ſnare? Yes, my friend, I am the only perſon in the world who is intimate enough with you to preſent it to your view. Have I not a right to talk to you as a ſiſter, as a mother?

Your career, you tell me, is finiſhed; if ſo, its end is premature. Though your firſt paſſion be extinguiſhed, your ſenſibility ſtill remains; and your heart is the more to be ſuſpected, as its only cauſe of reſtraint no longer exiſts. A young man of great ardour and ſuſceptibility reſolves to live continent and chaſte; he knows, he feels, he has a thouſand times ſaid, that fortitude of mind, which is productive of every virtue, depends on the purity of ſentiment which ſupports it. As love preſerved him from vice in his youth, his good ſenſe muſt ſecure him in manhood; however ſevere may be the duty enjoined him, he knows there is a pleaſure ariſing from it, that will compenſate its rigour; and, though it be neceſſary to enter the conflict when conqueſt is in view, can he do leſs now out of piety to God than he did before out of regard to a miſtreſs? Such, I imagine, is your way of reaſoning, and ſuch the maxims you adopt for your future conduct: for you have always deſpiſed thoſe perſons, who, content with

outward appearances, have one doctrine for theory and another for practice, and who lay upon others a burthen of moral duties which they themſelves are unwilling to bear.

But, what kind of life has ſuch a prudent virtuous man made choice of, in order to comply with thoſe rules he has preſcribed? Leſs a philoſopher than a man of probity and a chriſtian, he has not ſurely taken his vanity for a guide: he certainly knows that it is much eaſier to avoid temptations, than to withſtand them; does he, therefore, avoid all dangerous opportunities? does he ſhun thoſe objects which are moſt likely to move his paſſions? has he that humble diffidence of himſelf which is the beſt ſecurity to virtue? Quite the contrary; he does not heſitate raſhly to ruſh on danger. At thirty years of age, he is going to ſeclude himſelf from the world, in company with women of his own age; one of whom was once too dear to him for him ever to baniſh the dangerous idea of their former intimacy from his mind; another of whom has lived with him in great familiarity, and a third is attached to him by all thoſe ties which obligations conferred excite in grateful minds. He is going to expoſe himſelf to every thing that can renew thoſe paſſions which are but imperfectly extinguiſhed; he is going to entangle himſelf in thoſe ſnares which he ought, of all others, to avoid. There is not one circumſtance attending his ſituation which ought not to make him diſtruſt his own

ſtrength,

ſtrength, nor one which will not render him for ever contemptible, ſhould he be weak enough to be off his guard for a moment. Where then is that great fortitude of mind, in which he preſumes to place ſuch confidence? In what inſtance has it hitherto appeared that he can be anſwerable for it, for the future; did he acquire it at Paris, in the houſe of the colonel's lady? or was he influenced by it laſt ſummer at Meillerie? has it been his ſecurity during the winter againſt the charms of another object, or this ſpring againſt the terrifying apprehenſions of a dream? By the ſlender aſſiſtance it once afforded him, is there any reaſon to ſuppoſe it will always bring him off victorious? He may know, when his duty requires, how to combat the paſſions of a friend? but will he be as capable of combating his own? Alas! let him learn from the beſt half of his life to think modeſtly of the other.

A ſtate of violence and conſtraint may be ſupported for a while. Six months, for inſtance, a year, is nothing: fix any certain time, and we may preſume to hold out. But when that ſtate is to laſt as long as we live, where is the fortitude that can ſupport itſelf under it? Who can ſuſtain a conſtant ſtate of ſelf-denial? O my friend! a life of pleaſure is ſhort, but a life of virtue is exceeding long. We muſt be inceſſantly on our guard. The inſtant of enjoyment is ſoon paſſed, and never more returns; that of doing evil paſſes away too; but as conſtantly

ſtantly returns, and is ever preſent. Forget ourſelves for a moment and we are undone! Is it in ſuch a ſtate of danger and tryal that our days can paſs away in happineſs and tranquillity? or is it for ſuch as have once eſcaped the danger to expoſe themſelves again to like hazards? what future occaſions may not ariſe, as hazardous as thoſe you have eſcaped, and, what is worſe, equally unforeſeen? Do you think the monuments of danger exiſt only in Meillerie? they are in every place where we are; we carry them about with us: yes, you know too well that a ſuſceptible mind intereſts the whole univerſe in its paſſion, and that every object here will excite our former ideas, and remind us of our former ſenſations.

I believe, however, I am preſumptuous enough to believe, that will never happen to me; and my heart is ready enough to anſwer for your's. But, though it may be above meanneſs, is that eaſy heart of your's above weakneſs? and am I the only perſon here it will coſt you pains to *reſpect?* forget not, St. Preux, that all who are near to me are entitled to be reſpected as myſelf; reflect that you are continually to bear the innocent play of an amiable woman; think of the eternal diſgrace you will deſervedly fall into, if your heart ſhould go aſtray for a moment, and you ſhould harbour any deſigns on her you have ſo much reaſon to honour.

I would have your duty, your word, and your ancient friendſhip reſtrain you; the obſtacles which

which virtue throws in your way may ſerve to diſcourage idle hopes; and, by the help of your reaſon, you may ſuppreſs your fruitleſs wiſhes; but would you thence be freed from the influence of ſenſe, and the ſnares of imagination? Obliged to reſpect us both, and to forget our ſex, you will be liable to temptation from our ſervants, and might perhaps think yourſelf juſtified by the condeſcenſion: but would you be in reality leſs culpable? or can the difference of rank change the nature of a crime? on the contrary, you would debaſe yourſelf the more, as the means you might employ would be more ignoble. But, is it poſſible that you ſhould be guilty of ſuch means! no, periſh the baſe man, who would bargain for a heart, and make love a mercenary paſſion! ſuch men are the cauſe of all the crimes which are committed by debauchery: for ſhe who is once bought will be ever after to be ſold: and, amidſt the ſhame into which ſhe is inevitably plunged, who may moſt properly be ſaid to be the authour of her miſery, the brutal wretch who inſults her in a brothel, or her ſeducer, who ſhowed her the way thither, by firſt paying a price for her favours?

I will add another conſideration, which, if I am not miſtaken, will affect you. You have been witneſs of the pains I have taken to eſtabliſh order and decency in my family. Tranquillity and modeſty, happineſs and innocence prevail throughout the whole. Think, my friend, of yourſelf, of me, of what we were, of

what

what we are, and what we ought to be. Shall I have it one day to ſay, in regretting my loſt labour, It is to you I owe the diſorder of my houſe?

Let us, if it be neceſſary, go farther, and ſacrifice even modeſty to a true regard for virtue. Man is not made for a life of celibacy, and it is very difficult, in a ſtate ſo contrary to that of nature, not to fall into ſome publick or private irregularity. For how ſhall a man be always on his guard againſt an inteſtine enemy? Look upon the raſh votaries of other countries, who enter into a ſolemn vow not to be men. To puniſh them for their preſumption, heaven abandons them to their own weakneſs: they call themſelves ſaints, for entering into engagements which neceſſarily make them ſinners; their continence is only pretended, and, for affecting to ſet themſelves above the duties of humanity, they debaſe themſelves below it. It is eaſy to ſtand upon punctilio, and affect a nice obſervance of laws which are kept only in appearance *; but a truely virtuous man cannot but perceive that his eſſential

* Some men are continent without having any merit in it, others are ſo through virtue, and I doubt not there are many Romiſh prieſts in the latter ſituation; but to impoſe a ſtate of celibacy on ſo numerous a body of men as the clergy of that church, it is not to bid them abſtain from women, but to be content with the wives of other men. I am really ſurpriſed, that in countries where morals are held in any eſteem the legiſlature ſhould tolerate ſuch ſcandalous engagements.

eſſential duties are ſufficient, without extending them to works of ſupererogation.

It is, my dear St. Preux, the true humility of a chriſtian always to think his duty too much for his ſtrength: apply this rule, and you will be ſenſible that a ſituation which might only alarm another man ought to make you tremble. The leſs you are afraid, the more reaſon you have to fear, and if you are not in ſome degree deterred by the ſeverity of your duty, you can have little hopes of being able to diſcharge it.

Such are the perils that threaten you here. I know that you will never deliberately venture to do ill; and the only evils you have cauſe to apprehend are thoſe which you cannot foreſee. I do not, however, bid you draw your concluſions ſolely from my reaſoning: but recommend it to your mature conſideration. If you can anſwer me in a manner ſatisfactory to yourſelf, I ſhall be ſatisfied; if you can rely upon yourſelf, I too ſhall rely upon you. Tell me that you have overcome all the foibles of humanity, that you are an angel, and I will receive you with open arms.

But, is it poſſible for you, whilſt a man, to lead a life of continual ſelf-denial and mortification? to have almoſt the moſt ſevere duties to perform? to be conſtantly on your guard with thoſe whom you ſo ſincerely love? No, no, my amiable friend, happy is he who in this life can make one ſingle ſacrifice to virtue. I have one

in view, worthy of a man who has ſtruggled and ſuffered in its cauſe. If I do not preſume too far, the happineſs I have ventured to deſign for you will repay every obligation of my heart, and be even greater than you would have enjoyed, had Providence favoured our firſt inclinations. As I cannot make you an angel myſelf, I would unite you to one who would be the guardian of your heart, who will refine it, re-animate it to virtue, and under whoſe auſpices you may ſecurely live with us in this peaceful retreat of angelick innocence. You will not, I conceive, be under much difficulty to gueſs who it is I mean, as it is an object which has already got footing in the heart, which it will one day entirely poſſeſs, if my project ſucceeds.

I foreſee all the difficulties attending it, without being diſcouraged, as the deſign is virtuous. I know the influence I have over my fair friend, and think I ſhall not abuſe it by exerting my power in your favour. But you are acquainted with her reſolutions, and before I attempt to alter them I ought to be well aſſured of your ſentiments, that while I am endeavouring to prevail on her to permit your addreſſes, I may be able to anſwer for your love and gratitude: for, if the inequality which fortune has made between you deprives you of the privilege of making ſuch a propoſal yourſelf, it is ſtill more improper that this privilege ſhould be granted before we know how you will receive it. I am

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not unacquainted with your delicacy, and know, that if you have any objections to make they will reſpect her rather than yourſelf. But, baniſh your idle ſcruples. Do you think you can be more tenacious of my friend's reputation than I am? No, however dear you are to me, you need not be apprehenſive leſt I ſhould prefer your intereſt to her honour. But, as I value the eſteem of people of ſenſe, ſo I deſpiſe the prejudices and inconſiderate cenſures of the multitude, who are ever led by the falſe glare of things, and are ſtrangers to real virtue. Were the difference in point of fortune between you a hundred times greater than it is, there is no rank in life to which great talents and good behaviour have not a right to aſpire: and what pretenſions can a woman have to diſdain to make that man her huſband whom ſhe is proud to number among her friends? You know the ſentiments of us both in theſe matters. A falſe modeſty, and the fear of cenſure, lead to more bad actions than good ones; for virtue never bluſhes at any thing but vice.

As to yourſelf, that pride which I have ſome times remarked in you cannot be exerted with greater impropriety than on this occaſion; and it would be a kind of ingratitude in you to receive from her reluctantly one favour more. Beſides, however nice and difficult you may be in this point, you muſt own it is more agreeable, and has a much better look, for a man to be indebted for his fortune to his wife than to a friend;

friend; as he becomes a protector of the one, and is protected by the other; and as nothing can be more true than that a virtuous man cannot have a better friend than his wife.

If, after all, there remain in the bottom of your heart any repugnance to enter into new love engagements, you cannot too ſpeedily ſuppreſs them, both for your own honour and my repoſe: for I ſhall never be ſatisfied with either you or myſelf till you really become what you ought to be, and take pleaſure in what your duty requires. Ought not I, my friend, to be leſs apprehenſive of ſuch a repugnance to new engagements than of inclinations too relative to the old? What have I not done with regard to you to diſcharge my duty? I have even exceeded my promiſes. Do I not even give you an Eloiſa? Will you not poſſeſs the better half of myſelf, and be ſtill dearer to the other? With what pleaſure ſhall I not indulge myſelf, after ſuch a connexion, in my attachment to you! Yes, accompliſh to her thoſe vows you made to me, and let your heart fulfil with her all our former engagements. May it, if poſſible, give to her's all it owes to mine. O St. Preux! to her I transfer the ancient debt. Remember it is not eaſily to be diſcharged.

Such, my friend, is the ſcheme I have projected to re-unite you to us without danger, in giving you the ſame place in our family which you already hold in our hearts; attached by the moſt dear and ſacred connexions, we ſhall live together

together ſiſters and brothers; you no longer your own enemy nor our's. The warmeſt ſentiments when legitimate are not dangerous. When we are no longer under the neceſſity of ſuppreſſing them, they cannot excite our apprehenſions. So far indeed from endeavouring to ſuppreſs ſentiments ſo innocent and delightful, we ſhould make them at once both our pleaſure and our duty. We ſhould then love each other with the pureſt affection, and ſhould enjoy the united charms of friendſhip, love, and innocence. And, if in executing the charge you have taken upon yourſelf, heaven ſhould recompenſe the care you take of our children, by bleſſing you with children of your own, you will then know from experience how to eſtimate the ſervice you have done us. Endowed with the greateſt bleſſings of which human nature is capable, you will learn to ſupport with pleaſure the agreeable burthen of a life uſeful to your friends and relations; you will, in ſhort, perceive to be true what the vain philoſophy of the vicious could never believe, that happineſs is even in this world the reward of the virtuous.

Reflect at leiſure on my propoſal; not, however, to determine whether it ſuits you; I require not your anſwer on that point; but whether it is proper for Mrs. Orbe, and whether you can make her as happy as ſhe ought to make you. You know in what manner ſhe has diſcharged her duty in every ſtation of her ſex. Judge by what ſhe is, what ſhe has a

right to expect. She is as capable of love as Eloiſa, and ſhould be loved in the ſame degree. If you think you can deſerve her, ſpeak; my friendſhip will try to effect ſuch an union, and from her's, flatters itſelf with ſucceſs. But, if my hopes are deceived in you, you are at leaſt a man of honour and probity, and are not unacquainted with her delicacy; you would not covet happineſs at the expenſe of her felicity: let your heart be worthy of her, or let the offer of it never be made.

Once more, I ſay, conſult your own heart; conſider well of your anſwer before you ſend it. In matters relative to the happineſs of one's whole life, common prudence will not permit us to determine without great deliberation: but, in an affair where our whole ſoul, our happineſs both here and hereafter is at ſtake, even to deliberate lightly would be a crime. Call to your aid, therefore, my good friend, all the dictates of true wiſdom; nor will I be aſhamed to put you in mind of thoſe which are moſt eſſential. You don't want religion: I am afraid, however, you do not draw from it all the advantages which your conduct might receive from its precepts: but that your philoſophical pride elevates you above true chriſtian ſimplicity: in particular, your notions of prayer are by no means conſiſtent with mine. In your opinion, that act of humiliation is of no uſe to us. God having implanted in every man's conſcience all that is neceſſary to direct him aright, has afterwards

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left him to himſelf, a free agent, to act as he pleaſes. But you well know this is not the doctrine of St. Paul, nor that which is profeſſed in our church. We are free agents, it is true, but we are by nature ignorant, weak, and prone to evil: of whom then ſhall we acquire ſtrength and knowledge, but of the ſource of all power and wiſdom? and how ſhall we obtain them, if we are not humble enough to aſk? Take care, my friend, that to the ſublime ideas you entertain of the Supreme Being human pride doth not annex the abject notions which belong only to man. Can you think the Deity wants ſuch arts as are neceſſary to human underſtanding, or that he lies under the neceſſity of generaliſing his ideas, to comprehend them the more readily? According to your notions of things, providence would be under an embarraſſment to take care of individuals. You ſeem to be afraid that a conſtant attention to a diverſity of objects muſt perplex and fatigue infinite wiſdom, than to think that it can act better by general than particular laws; doubtleſs becauſe this ſeems eaſier for the Almighty. The Deity is highly obliged to ſuch great philoſophers for furniſhing him with convenient means of action, to eaſe him of his labour. But why ſhould we aſk any thing of him? Say you: is he not acquainted with our wants? Is he not a father that provides for his children? Do we know better than he what is needful for us, or are we more deſirous of happineſs than he is that we ſhould be happy?

This, my dear St. Preux, is all ſophiſtry. The greateſt of our wants, even the only one we have no remedy for, is that of being inſenſible of them; and the firſt ſtep to relief is the knowledge of our neceſſities. To be wiſe we muſt be humble; in the ſenſibility of our weakneſs we become ſtrong. Thus juſtice is united to clemency; thus grace and liberty triumph together.

Slaves by our weakneſs, we are ſet free by prayer; for it depends on us to ſeek and obtain favour; but the power to do this depends not on ourſelves.

Learn then not always to depend on your own ſagacity on difficult occaſions; but on that Being whoſe omnipotence is equal to his wiſdom, and who knows how to direct us in every thing right. The greateſt defect in human wiſdom, even in that which has only virtue for its object, is a too great confidence, which makes us judge by the preſent of the future, and of our whole lives from the experience of a ſingle moment. We perceive ourſelves reſolute one inſtant, and therefore conclude we ſhall always be ſo. Puffed up with that pride, which is nevertheleſs mortified by daily experience, we think we are under no danger of falling into a ſnare which we have once eſcaped. The modeſt language of true fortitude is, *I had reſolution, it is true, on this or that occaſion*; but he who boaſts of his preſent ſecurity knows not how weak he may prove on the next trial? and, relying on his borrowed

borrowed ſtrength as if it were his own, deſerves to feel the want of it when he ſtands in moſt need of aſſiſtance. How vain are all our projects, how abſurd our reaſonings in the eyes of that Being, who is not confined to time or ſpace! Man is ſo weak as to diſregard things which are placed at a diſtance from him: he ſees only the objects which immediately ſurround him; changes his notions of things as the point of ſight is changed from whence he views them. We judge of the future from what agrees with us now, without knowing how far that which pleaſes to-day may be diſagreeable to-morrow; we depend on ourſelves, as if we were always the ſame, and yet are changing every hour. Who can tell if they ſhall always deſire what they now wiſh for? if they ſhall be to-morrow what they are to-day? if external objects, and even a change in the conſtitution of the body, may not vary the modification of their minds, and if we may not be made miſerable by the very means we have concerted for our happineſs! Show me the fixed and certain rule of human wiſdom, and I will take it for my guide. But if the beſt leſſon it can teach us is, to diſtruſt our own ſtrength, let us have recourſe to that ſuperior wiſdom which cannot deceive us, and follow thoſe dictates which cannot lead us aſtray. It is that wiſdom I implore to enlighten my underſtanding to adviſe you; do you implore the ſame to direct your reſolutions. Whatever theſe be, I well

know you will take no ſtep which does not at preſent appear honourable and juſt; but this is not enough, it is neceſſary you ſhould take ſuch as will be always ſo; and of the means to do this neither you nor I are of ourſelves competent judges.

LETTER CLVII.

ANSWER.

FROM Eloiſa! a letter from her after ſeven years ſilence! yes, it is her writing—I ſee, I feel it: can my eyes be a ſtranger to characters which my heart can never forget? And do you ſtill remember my name? Do you ſtill know how to write it? Does not your hand tremble as your pen forms the letters? Alas! Eloiſa, whither have you hurried my wandering thoughts? The form, the fold, the ſeal, the ſuperſcription of your letter call to my mind thoſe very different epiſtles which love uſed to dictate. In this the heart and hand ſeem to be in oppoſition to each other. Ought the ſame hand-writing to be employed in committing to paper ſentiments ſo very different?

You will be apt to judge that my thinking ſo much of your former letters too evidently confirms what you have ſuggeſted in your laſt. But you are miſtaken. I plainly perceive that I am changed, and that you are no longer the ſame: and what proves it to me the moſt, is, that except

except your beauty and goodneſs, every thing I ſee in you now is a new ſubject of admiration. This remark may anticipate your aſſurance. I rely not on my own ſtrength, but on the ſentiment which makes it unneceſſary. Inſpired with every thing which I ought to honour in her whom I have ceaſed to adore, I know into what degree of reſpect my former homage ought to be converted. Penetrated with the moſt lively gratitude, it is true I love you as much as ever; but I eſteem and honour you moſt for the recovery of my reaſon.

Ever ſince the diſcerning and judicious Wolmar has diſcovered my real ſentiments, I have acquired a better knowledge of myſelf, and am leſs alarmed at my weakneſs. Let it deceive my imagination as it will, the deluſion will be ſtill agreeable; it is ſufficient that it can no longer offend you, and that my ideal errours ſerve in the end to preſerve me from real danger.

Believe me, Eloiſa, there are impreſſions, which neither time, circumſtance, nor reaſon can efface. The wound may heal, but the ſcar will remain, an honourable mark that preſerves the heart from any other wound. Love and inconſtancy are incompatible; when a lover is fickle, he ceaſes to be a lover. For my part, I am no longer a lover; but, in ceaſing to adore you as ſuch, I remain under your protection. I am no longer apprehenſive of danger from you, but then you prevent my apprehen-

ſions from others. No, reſpectable Eloiſa, you ſhall never ſee in me any other than a friend to your perſon, and a lover only of your virtues: but our love, our firſt, our matchleſs love ſhall never be rooted out of my heart. The remembrance of the flower of my age ſhall never be thus tarniſhed: for, were I to live whole centuries, thoſe happy hours of my youth will never return, nor be baniſhed from my memory. We may, it is true, be no longer the ſame; but I ſhall never forget what we have been.

Let us come now to your couſin. I cannot help confeſſing, my dear friend, that ſince I have no longer dared to contemplate your charms, I have become more ſenſible to her's. What eyes could be perpetually ſtraying from beauty to beauty without fixing their admiration oneither! mine have lately gazed on her's perhaps with too much pleaſure: and I muſt own that her charms, before imprinted on my heart, have during my abſence made a deeper impreſſion. The ſanctuary of my heart is ſhut up; but her image is in the temple. I gradually become to her what I might have been at firſt, had I never beheld you; and it was in your power only to make me ſenſible of the difference between what I feel for her and the love I had for you. My ſenſes, releaſed from that terrible paſſion, embrace the delightful ſentiments of friendſhip. But muſt love be the reſult of this union? Ah, Eloiſa! what difference! where is the enthuſiaſm? the adoration? where

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are thoſe divine tranſports, thoſe diſtractions, a hundred times more ſublime, more delightful, more forcible than reaſon itſelf? A ſlight warmth, a momentary delirium, ſeiſe me, affect me a while, and then vaniſh. In your couſin and me I ſee two friends who have a tender regard for each other, and confeſs it. But have lovers a *regard* for each other? No, *you* and *I* are two words prohibited in the lovers language. Two lovers are not two perſons, but one.

Is my heart then really at eaſe? how can it be ſo? She is charming, ſhe is both your friend and mine: I am attached to her by gratitude, and think of her in the moſt delightful moments of reflexion. How many obligations are hence conferred on a ſuſceptible mind, and how is it poſſible to ſeparate the tendereſt ſentiments from thoſe to which ſhe has ſuch an undoubted right! Alas! it is decreed that, between you and her, my heart will never enjoy one peaceful moment!

O women, women! dear and fatal objects! whom nature has made beautiful for our torment, who puniſh us when we brave your power, who purſue when we dread your charms: whoſe love and hate are equally deſtructive; and whom we can neither approach nor fly with impunity! beauty, charm, ſympathy! inconceivable being, or chimera! ſource of pain and pleaſure! beauty, more terrible to mortals than the element to which the birth of your goddeſs is aſcribed! it is you who create thoſe tem-

peſts which are ſo deſtructive to mankind. How dearly, Eloiſa! how dearly, Clara! do I purchaſe your cruel friendſhip!

I have lived in a tempeſt, and it is you who have always raiſed it: but how different are the agitations which you ſeparately excite! different as the waves of the lake of Geneva from thoſe of the Atlantick ocean. The firſt are ſhort and quick, and by their conſtant agitation are often fatal to the ſmall barks that ride without making way on the ſurface: but on the ocean, calm and mild in appearance, we find ourſelves mounted aloft, and ſoftly borne forward to a vaſt diſtance on waves, whoſe motions are ſlow and almoſt imperceptible. We think we ſcarce move from the place, and arrive at the fartheſt parts of the earth.

Such is in fact the difference between the effects which your charms and her's have on my heart. That firſt unequalled paſſion, which determined the deſtiny of my life, and which nothing could conquer but itſelf, had its birth before I was ſenſible of its generation; it hurried me on before I knew where I was, and involved me in irrevocable ruin before I believed myſelf led aſtray. While the wind was fair, my labouring bark was every moment alternately ſoaring into the clouds, and plunging into the deep; but I am now becalmed, and know no longer where I am. On the contrary, I ſee, I feel too well how much her preſence affects me, and conceive my danger greater than it really is.

I experience ſome ſlight raptures, which are no ſooner felt than gone. I am one moment tranſported with paſſion, and the next peaceful and calm: in vain is the veſſel beaten about by the waves, while there is no wind to fill its ſails; my heart, contented with her real charms, does not exaggerate them, ſhe appears more beautiful to my eyes than to my imagination; and I am more afraid of her when preſent than abſent. Your charms have, on the contrary, had always a very different effect: but at Clarens I alternately experience both.

Since I left it, indeed, the image of our couſin preſents itſelf ſometimes more powerfully to my imagination. Unhappily, however, it never appears alone: it affects me not with love, but with diſquietude.

Theſe are in reality my ſentiments with regard both to the one and the other. All the reſt of your ſex are nothing to me; the pangs I have ſo long ſuffered have baniſhed them entirely from my remembrance;

E fornito 'l mio tempo a mezzo gli anni.
My days elaps'd ere half my years are gone.

Adverſity has ſupplied the place of fortitude, to enable me to conquer nature and triumph over temptation. People in diſtreſs have few deſires, you have taught me to vanquiſh by reſiſting them. An unhappy paſſion is an inſtrument of wiſdom. My heart is become, if I may ſo expreſs myſelf, the organ of all my wants; for when that is at eaſe I want nothing. Let not

you or your couſin diſturb its tranquillity, and it will for the future be always at reſt.

In this ſituation, what have I to fear from myſelf? and by what cruel precaution would you rob me of happineſs, in order to prevent my being expoſed to loſe it? how capricious is it to have made me fight and conquer, to rob me afterwards of there ward of my victory? Do you not condemn thoſe who brave unneceſſary danger? why then did you recall me at ſo great a hazard, to run ſo many riſks? or, why would you baniſh me when I am ſo worthy to remain? Ought you to have permitted your huſband to take the trouble he has done for nothing? why did you not prevent his taking the pains which you were determined to render fruitleſs? why did you not ſay to him, *Leave the poor wretch at the other end of the world, or I ſhall certainly tranſport him again?* Alas! the more afraid you are of me, the ſooner you ought to recall me home. It is not in your preſence I am in danger, but in your abſence; and I dread the power of your charms only where you are not. When the formidable Eloiſa purſues me, I fly for refuge to Mrs. Wolmar, and I am ſecure. Whither ſhall I fly, if you deprive me of the aſylum I find in her? all times and places are dangerous while ſhe is abſent; for in every place I find either Clara or Eloiſa. In reflecting on the time paſt, in meditating on the preſent, the one and the other alternately agitate my heart, and thus my reſtleſs imagination becomes tranquil

quil only in your preſence, and it is with you only I find ſecurity againſt myſelf. How ſhall I explain to you the change I perceive in approaching you? you have always exerted the ſame ſovereign power; but its effects are now different from what they were: in ſuppreſſing the tranſports you once inſpired, your empire is more noble and ſublime; a peaceful ſerenity has ſucceeded to the ſtorm of the paſſions; my heart, modelled by your's, loves in the ſame manner, and becomes tranquil by your example. But in this tranſitory repoſe I enjoy only a ſhort truce with the paſſions; and, though I am exalted to the perfection of angels in your preſence, I no ſooner forſake you than I fall into my native meanneſs. Yes, Eloiſa, I am apt ſometimes to think I have two ſouls, and that the good one is depoſited in your hands. Ah! why do you ſeek to ſeparate me from it?

But you are fearful of the conſequences of youthful deſires, extinguiſhed only by trouble and adverſity. You are afraid for the young women who are in your houſe, and under your protection. You are afraid of that which the prudent Wolmar was not afraid of. How mortifying to me are ſuch apprehenſions! Do you then eſteem your friend leſs than the meaneſt of your ſervants? I can, however, forgive your thinking ill of me; but never your not paying yourſelf that reſpect which is ſo juſtly your due. No, Eloiſa, the flame with which I once burnt has purified my heart; and I am no longer ac-

tuated like other men. After what I have been, ſhould I ſo debaſe myſelf, though but for a moment, I would hide myſelf in the remoteſt corner of the earth, and ſhould never think myſelf too far removed from Eloiſa.

What! could I diſturb that peaceful order and domeſtick tranquillity, in which I take ſo much pleaſure? could I ſully that ſweet retreat of innocence and peace, wherein I have dwelt with ſo much honour? could I be ſo baſe as—— No, the moſt debauched, the moſt abandoned, of men would be affected with ſo charming a picture. He could not fail of being enamoured with virtue in this aſylum. So far from carrying hither his licentious manners, he would betake himſelf thither to caſt them off. Could I then, Eloiſa, be capable of what you inſinuate? and that under your own eyes? No, my dear friend, open your doors to me without ſcruple, your manſion is to me the temple of virtue; its ſacred image ſtrikes me in every part of it, and binds me to its ſervice. I am not indeed an angel; but I ſhall dwell in the habitation of angels, and will imitate their example. Thoſe who would not wiſh to reſemble them will never ſeek their company.

You ſee it is with difficulty I come to the chief object of your laſt letter; that which I ſhould have firſt and moſt maturely conſidered, and which only ſhould now engage my thoughts, if I could pretend to the happineſs propoſed to me. O Eloiſa, benevolent and incomparable friend!

friend! in offering me thus your other half, the moſt valuable preſent in the univerſe next to yourſelf, you do more for me if poſſible than ever you have done before. A blind ungovernable paſſion might have prevailed on you to give me yourſelf; but to give me your friend is the ſincereſt proof of your eſteem. From this moment I begin to think myſelf, indeed, a man of real merit, ſince I am thus diſtinguiſhed. But how cruel, at the ſame time, is this proof of it. In accepting your offer I ſhould bely my heart, and to deſerve muſt refuſe it. You know me, and may judge.

It is not enough that your charming couſin ſhould engage my affections; I know ſhe ſhould be loved as you are. But will it, can it be? or does it depend on me to do her that juſtice, in this particular, which is her due? Alas! if you intended ever to unite me to her, why did you not leave me a heart to give her; a heart which ſhe might have inſpired with new ſentiments, and which in turn might have offered her the firſt-fruits of love! I ought to have a heart at eaſe and at liberty, ſuch as was that of the prudent and worthy Orbe, to love her only as he did. I ought to be as deſerving as he was, in order to ſucceed him: otherwiſe the compariſon between her former and preſent ſituation will only ſerve to render the latter leſs ſupportable; the cold and divided love of a ſecond huſband, ſo far from conſoling her for the loſs of the firſt, will but make her regret him the more.

By her union with me, ſhe will only convert a tender grateful friend into a common huſband. What will ſhe gain by ſuch an exchange? She will be doubly a loſer by it; her ſuſceptible mind will ſeverely feel its loſs; and how ſhall I ſupport a continual ſadneſs, of which I am the cauſe, and which I cannot remove? In ſuch a ſituation, alas! her grief would be firſt fatal to me. No, Eloiſa, I can never be happy at the expenſe of her eaſe. I love her too well to marry her.

Be happy! no, can I be happy without making her ſo? can either of the parties be ſeparately happy or miſerable in marriage?. are not their pleaſures and pains common to both? and does not the chagrin which one gives to the other always rebound to the perſon who cauſed it? I ſhould be made miſerable by her afflictions, without being made happy by her goodneſs. Beauty, fortune, merit, love, all might conſpire to enſure my felicity! but my heart, my froward heart, would counterwork them all; would poiſon the ſource of my delights, and make me miſerable in the very midſt of happineſs.

In my preſent ſituation, I take pleaſure in her company: but if I ſhould attempt to augment that pleaſure by a cloſer union, I ſhall deprive myſelf of the moſt agreeable moments of my life. Her turn for humour and gaiety may give an amorous caſt to her friendſhip, but this is only whilſt there are witneſſes to her favours.

I may

I may alſo feel too lively an emotion for her; but it is only when by your preſence you have baniſhed every tender ſentiment for Eloiſa. When ſhe and I are by ourſelves, it is you only who render our converſation agreeable. The more our attachment increaſes, the more we think on the ſource from which it ſprang; the ties of friendſhip are drawn cloſer, and we love each other but to talk of you. Hence ariſe a thouſand pleaſing reflexions, pleaſing to Clara and more ſo to me, all which a cloſer union would infallibly deſtroy. Will not ſuch reflexions, in that caſe too delightful, be a kind of infidelity to her? and with what face can I make a beloved and reſpectable wife the confident of thoſe infidelities of which my heart, in ſpite of me, would be guilty? This heart could no longer tranfuſe itſelf into her's. No longer daring to talk of you, I ſhould ſoon forbear to ſpeak at all. Honour and duty impoſing on me a new reſerve, would thus eſtrange me from the wife of my boſom, and I ſhould have no longer a guide or a counſellor to direct my ſteps or correct my errours. Is this the homage ſhe has a right to expect from me? is this that tribute of gratitude and tenderneſs which I ought to pay her? is it thus that I am to make her and myſelf happy?

Is it poſſible that Eloiſa can have forgotten our mutual vows? for my part, I never can forget them. I have loſt all, except my ſincerity, and that I will preſerve inviolate to my

laſt hour. As I could not live for you, I will die unmarried. Nay, had I not already made ſuch a promiſe to myſelf, I would do it now. For though it be a duty to marry, it is yet a more indiſpenſable one not to make any perſon unhappy; and all the ſentiments ſuch a contract would now excite in me would be mixed with the conſtant regret of that which I once vainly hoped for: a regret which would at once be my torment, and that of her who ſhould be unfortunate enough to be my wife. I ſhould require of her thoſe days of bliſs which I expected with you. How ſhould I ſupport the compariſon! what woman in the world could bear that? Ah, no, I could never endure the thoughts of being at once deprived of you, and deſtined to be the huſband of another.

Seek not then, my dear friend, to ſhake thoſe reſolutions on which depends the repoſe of my life: ſeek not to recall me out of that ſtate of annihilation into which I am fallen; leſt, in bringing me back to a ſenſe of my exiſtence, my wounds ſhould bleed afreſh, and I ſhould again ſink under a load of misfortunes. Since my return I perceived how deeply I became intereſted in whatever concerned your charming friend; but I was not alarmed at it, as I knew the ſituation of my heart would never permit me to be too ſollicitous. Indeed, I was not diſpleaſed with an emotion, which, while it added ſoftneſs to the attachment I always had for Clara, would aſſiſt in diverting my thoughts from

from a more dangerous object, and enable me to ſupport your preſence with greater confidence. This emotion has ſomething in it of the pleaſure of love, without any of its pains. The calm delight I take in ſeeing her is not diſturbed by the reſtleſs deſire of poſſeſſing her: contented to paſs my whole life in the manner I paſſed the laſt winter, I find between you both that peaceful and agreeable ſituation*, which tempers the auſterity of virtue, and renders its leſſons amiable. If a vain tranſport affects me for a moment, every thing conſpires to ſuppreſs it; and I have too effectually vanquiſhed thoſe infinitely more impetuous and dangerous emotions to fear any that can aſſail me now. I honour your friend no leſs than I love her, and that is ſaying every thing. But, ſhould I conſult only my own intereſt? the rights of the tendereſt friendſhip are too valuable, to riſk their loſs, by endeavouring to extend them: and I need not even think of the reſpect which is her due, to prevent me ever ſaying a ſingle word in private converſation which would require an interpretation, or which ſhe ought not to underſtand. She may perhaps have ſometimes remarked a little too much ſollicitude in my behaviour towards her; but ſhe has ſurely never obſerved in my heart any deſire to expreſs it. Such as I was for ſix

* This is a direct contradiction to what he aſſerted before. The poor philoſopher ſeems to be in a droll dilemma between two pretty women. One might be apt to think he choſe to make love to neither, that he might *the better love them* both.

ſix months paſt, ſuch would I be with regard to her as long as I live. I know none who approach you ſo perfect as ſhe is; but were ſhe even more perfect than yourſelf, I feel that after having been your lover I ſhould never have become her's.

But before I conclude this letter I muſt give you my opinion of your's. Yes, Eloiſa, with all your prudence and virtue, I can diſcover in it the ſcruples of a timorous mind, which thinks it a duty to frighten itſelf; and conceives its ſecurity lies in being afraid. This extreme timidity is as dangerous as exceſſive confidence. In conſtantly repreſenting to us imaginary monſters, it waſtes our ſtrength by combating chimeras; and, by terrifying us without cauſe, makes us leſs on our guard againſt, as well as leſs capable of diſcerning real dangers. Read over again, now and then, the letter which Lord B—— wrote to you laſt year, on the ſubject of your huſband; you will find in it ſome good advice, that may be of ſervice to you in many reſpects. I do not diſcommend your devotion, it is affecting, amiable, and like yourſelf; it is ſuch as even your huſband ſhould be pleaſed with. But take care leſt timidity and precaution lead you to quietiſm; and leſt by repreſenting to yourſelf danger on every ſide, you are induced at length to confide in nothing. Don't you know, my dear friend, that a ſtate of virtue is a ſtate of warfare? Let us employ our thoughts leſs on the dangers which threaten us, than on ourſelves,

ourſelves, that we may always be prepared to withſtand temptation. If to run in the way of temptation is to deſerve to fall, to ſhun it with too much ſollicitude is often to fly from the opportunities of diſcharging the nobleſt duties: it is not good to be always thinking of temptations, even with a view to avoid them. I ſhall never ſeek temptation: but in whatever ſituation Providence may place me for the future, the eight months I paſſed at Clarens will be my ſecurity; nor ſhall I be afraid that any one will rob me of the prize you taught me to deſerve. I ſhall never be weaker than I have been, nor ſhall ever have greater temptations to reſiſt. I have left the bitterneſs of remorſe, and I have taſted the ſweets of victory, after all which I need not heſitate a moment in making my choice; every circumſtance of my paſt life, even my errours, being a ſecurity for my future behaviour.

I ſhall not pretend to enter with you into any new or profound diſquiſitions concerning the order of the univerſe, and the government of thoſe beings of which it is compoſed: it will be ſufficient for me to ſay, that in matters ſo far above human comprehenſion there is no other way of rightly judging of things inviſible, but by induction from thoſe which are viſible; and that all analogy makes for thoſe general laws which you ſeem to reject. The moſt rational ideas we can form of the Supreme Being confirm this opinion: for, although Omnipotence lies under no neceſſity of adopting methods to

abridge

abridge his labour, it is nevertheleſs worthy of Supreme Wiſdom to prefer the moſt ſimple modes of action, that there may be nothing uſeleſs either in cauſe or effect. In the formation of man he endowed him with all the neceſſary faculties to accompliſh what ſhould be required of him; and when we aſk of him the power to good, we aſk nothing of him but what he has already given us. He has given us underſtanding to know what is good, a heart to love*, and liberty to make choice of it. Therefore, in theſe ſublime gifts conſiſts divine grace; and as we have all received it, we are all accountable for its effects.

I have heard, in my time, a good deal of argument againſt the free-agency of man, and deſpiſe all its ſophiſtry. A caſuiſt may take what pains he will to prove that I am no free agent, my innate ſenſe of freedom conſtantly deſtroys his arguments: for whatever choice I make after deliberation, I feel plainly that it depended only on myſelf to have made the contrary. Indeed, all the ſcholaſtick ſubtilties I have heard on this head are futile and frivolous; becauſe they prove too much, are equally uſed to oppoſe truth and falſehood; and, whether man be a free agent or not, ſerve equally to prove one or the other. With theſe kind of reaſoners,

* St Preux ſuppoſes moral conſcience to depend on ſentiment not on judgement, which is contrary to the opinion of the philoſophers. I am apt to think, however, that he is in the right.

reaſoners, the Deity himſelf is not a free agent, and the word liberty is in fact a term of no meaning. They triumph not in having ſolved the difficulty, but in having ſubſtituted a chimera in its room. They begin by ſuppoſing that every intelligent being is merely paſſive, and from that ſuppoſition deduce conſequences to prove its inactivity: a very convenient method of argumentation truely! If they accuſe their adverſaries of reaſoning in this manner, they do us injuſtice. We do not *ſuppoſe* ourſelves free and active beings: we feel that we are ſo. It belongs to them to ſhow not only that this ſentiment may deceive us, but that it really does ſo*. The Biſhop of Cloyne has demonſtrated that, without any diverſity in appearances, body or matter may have no abſolute exiſtence; but is this enough to induce us to affirm that it abſolutely has no exiſtence? In all this, the mere phenomenon would coſt more trouble than the reality; and I will always hold by that which appears the moſt ſimple.

I don't believe, therefore, that after having provided in every ſhape for the wants of man in his formation, God intereſts himſelf in an extraordinary manner for one perſon more than another. Thoſe who abuſe the common aids of Providence are unworthy ſuch aſſiſtance, and thoſe who make good uſe of them have no occaſion

* This is not the matter in diſpute. It is to know whether the will be determined without a cauſe, or what is the cauſe that determines the will.

caſion for any other. Such a partiality appears to me injurious to divine juſtice. You will ſay, this ſevere and diſcouraging doctrine may be deduced from the Holy Scripture. Be it ſo. Is it not my firſt duty to honour my Creator? In whatever veneration then I hold the ſacred text, I hold its Authour in ſtill greater; and I could ſooner be induced to believe the Bible corrupted or unintelligible, than that God can be malevolent or unjuſt. St. Paul would not have the veſſel ſay to the potter who formed it, why haſt thou framed me thus? this is very well, if the potter ſhould apply it only to ſuch ſervices as he conſtructed it to perform; but if he ſhould cenſure this veſſel, as being inadequate to the purpoſe for which it was conſtructed; has it not a right to aſk, why haſt thou made me thus?

But, does it follow from hence that prayer is uſeleſs? God forbid that I ſhould deprive myſelf of that reſource. Every act of the underſtanding which raiſes us to God carries us above ourſelves; in imploring his aſſiſtance we learn to experience it. It is not his immediate act that operates on us, it is we that improve ourſelves, by raiſing our thoughts in prayer to him*. All that we aſk aright he beſtows; and, as you obſerve, we acquire ſtrength in confeſſing our weakneſs. But if we abuſe this ordinance, and turn myſticks, inſtead of raiſing ourſelves to God, we

* Our gallant philoſopher, having imitated Abelard in his practice, ſeems deſirous alſo of adopting his principles; their notions of prayer being a good deal alike.

we are loſt in our own wild imaginations; in ſeeking grace, we renounce reaſon; in order to obtain of heaven one bleſſing, we trample under foot another: and in obſtinately perſiſting that heaven ſhould enlighten our hearts, we extinguiſh the light of our underſtandings. But who are we that ſhould inſiſt on the Deity's performing miracles, when we pleaſe, in our favour?

You know very well, there is no good thing that may not be carried into a blameleſs exceſs; even devotion itſelf, when it degenerates into the madneſs of enthuſiaſm. Your's is too pure ever to arrive at this exceſs; but you have reaſon to be on your guard againſt a leſs degree of it. I have heard you often cenſure the extaſies of the pietiſts*; but do you know from whence they ariſe? from allotting a longer time to prayer than is conſiſtent with the weakneſs of human nature. Hence the ſpirits are exhauſted, the imagination takes fire, they ſee viſions, they become inſpired and prophetical; nor is it then in the power of the underſtanding to ſtop the progreſs of fanaticiſm.

Now, you ſhut yourſelf frequently in your cloſet, and are conſtant in prayer. You do not indeed as yet converſe with pietiſts, but you

* A ſort of enthuſiaſts that take it into their heads to follow the goſpel ſtrictly, according to the letter; in the manner of the Methodiſts in England, the Moravians in Germany, and the Janſeniſts in France; excepting, however, that the latter want only to be maſters, to be more ſevere and perſecuting than their enemies.

read their books. Not that I ever cenſured your taſte for the writings of the worthy Fenelon: but what have you to do with thoſe of his diſciple? You read Muralt. I indeed read him too: but I make choice of his letters, you of his Divine Inſtinct: But remark his end, lament the extravagant errours of that ſenſible man, and think of yourſelf. At preſent a pious, a true chriſtian, beware, Eloiſa, of becoming a mere devotee.

I receive your council, my dear friend, with the docility of a child, and give you mine with the zeal of a father. Since virtue, inſtead of diſſolving our attachments, has rendered them indiſſoluble, the ſame leſſons may be of uſe to both, as the ſame intereſts connect us. Never ſhall our hearts ſpeak to each other, never ſhall our eyes meet without preſenting to both a reſpectable object which ſhall mutually elevate our ſentiments, the perfection of the one reciprocally aſſiſting the other.

But though our deliberations may be common to both, the concluſion is not; it is your's alone to decide. Ceaſe not, then, you who have ever been miſtreſs of my deſtiny, ceaſe not to be ſo ſtill. Weigh my arguments, and pronounce ſentence: whatever you order me to do, I will ſubmit to your direction, and will at leaſt deſerve the continuance of it. Should you think it improper for me to ſee you perſonally again, you will yet be always preſent to my mind, and preſide over my actions. Should you deprive me of the honour of educating your offspring,

you

you will not deprive me of the virtues which you have inſpired. Theſe are the offspring of your mind, which mine adopts as its own, and will never bear to have them torn from it.

Speak to me, Eloiſa, freely. And as I have now been explicit as to what I think and feel on this occaſion, tell me what I muſt do. You know how far my deſtiny is connected with that of my illuſtrious friend. I have not conſulted him on this occaſion; I have neither ſhown him this letter nor your's. If he ſhould know that you diſapprove his project, or rather that of your huſband, he will reject it himſelf; and I am far from deſigning to deduce from thence any objection to your ſcruples; he only ought to be ignorant of them till you have finally determined. In the mean time, I ſhall find ſome means or other to delay our departure, in which, though they may ſurpriſe him a little, I know he will acquieſce. For my own part, I had rather never ſee you more, than to ſee you only juſt to bid you again adieu: and to live with you as a ſtranger would be a ſtate of mortification which I have not deſerved.

LETTER CLVIII.

FROM MRS. WOLMAR.

HOW does your head-ſtrong imagination affright and bewilder itſelf! and at what, pray? truely at the ſincereſt proofs of my friendſhip and eſteem which you ever experienced;

at the peaceful reflexions which my ſollicitude for your real happineſs inſpired; at the moſt obliging, the moſt advantageous, and the moſt honourable propoſal that was ever made you; at my deſire, perhaps an indiſcreet one, of uniting you by indiſſoluble ties to our family; at the deſire of making a relation, a kinſman of an ingrate, who affects to believe I want to diſcard him as a friend. To remove your preſent uneaſineſs, you need only take what I write in the moſt natural ſenſe the words will bear. But you have long delighted in tormenting yourſelf with falſe conſtructions. Your letters are like your life, ſublime and mean, maſterly and puerile. Ah, my dear philoſopher! will you never ceaſe to be a child?

Where, pray, have you learnt that I intended to impoſe on you new laws, to break with you, and ſend you back to the fartheſt part of the world? Do you really find this to be the tenour of my letter? In anticipating the pleaſure of living with you, I was fearful of thoſe inconveniencies, which I conceived might poſſibly ariſe; therefore, endeavoured to remove them, by making your fortune more equal to your merit and the regard I had for you. This is my whole crime; is there any thing in it at which you have reaſon to be alarmed?

Indeed, my friend, you are in the wrong; for you are not ignorant how dear you are to me, and how eaſy it is for you to obtain your wiſh, without ſeeking occaſion to torment *others* or yourſelf.

You may be aſſured, that, if your reſidence here is agreeable to you, it will be equally ſo to me; and that nothing Mr. Wolmar has done for me gives me greater ſatisfaction than the care he has taken to eſtabliſh you in this houſe. I agree to it with pleaſure, and now we ſhall be uſeful to each other. More ready to liſten to good advice. than to ſuggeſt it to ourſelves, we have both occaſion for a guide. Who can be more ſenſible of the danger of going aſtray than he whoſe return has coſt him ſo dear? what object can better repreſent that danger? After having broken through ſuch connexions as once ſubſiſted between us, the rememberance of them ſhould influence us to do nothing unworthy of the virtuous motives which induced us to break them. Yes, I ſhall always think myſelf obliged to make you the witneſs of every action of my life, and to communicate to you every ſentiment with which my heart is inſpired. Ah! my friend! I may be weak before the reſt of the world, but I can anſwer for myſelf in your company.

It is in this delicacy, which always ſurvives true love, and not in Mr. Wolmar's ſubtle diſtinctions, that we are to look for the cauſe of that elevation of ſoul, that innate fortitude, we experience. Such an explication is at leaſt more natural, and does more honour to our hearts, than his, and has a greater tendency to encourage us to virtue, which alone is ſufficient to give it the preference. Hence you may be aſ-

ſured, that, ſo far am I from being in ſuch a whimſical diſpoſition as you imagine, that I am juſt the reverſe. In ſo much that, if the project of your returning to reſide here muſt be given up, I ſhall eſteem ſuch an event as a great misfortune to you, to me, to my children, and even to my huſband; on whoſe account alone you know I have many reaſons for deſiring your preſence. But to ſpeak only of my own particular inclination: you remember your firſt arrival. Did I ſhew leſs pleaſure at ſeeing you than you felt in ſeeing me? Has it ever appeared to you that your ſtay at Clarens gave me the leaſt trouble or uneaſineſs? Did you think I betrayed the leaſt pleaſure at your departure? Muſt I go farther, and ſpeak to you with my uſual freedom? I will frankly confeſs to you, then, that the ſix laſt months we paſſed together were the happieſt of my life, and that in that ſhort ſpace of time I taſted all the happineſs of which my ſenſibility has furniſhed me the idea.

Never ſhall I forget one day, in particular, of the paſt winter, when after having been reading the journal of your voyages, and that of your friend's adventures, we ſupped in the Apollo. It was then that, reflecting on the felicity with which Providence had bleſſed me in this world, I looked round, and ſaw all my friends about me; my father, my huſband, my children, my couſin, Lord B——, and you, without counting Fanny, who did not caſt the leaſt blemiſh on the ſcene. This little ſaloon, ſaid I to myſelf, contains

contains all that is dear to my heart, and perhaps all that is deſireable in this world. I am here ſurrounded by every thing that intereſts me. The whole univerſe to me is in this little ſpot. I enjoy at once the regard I have for my friends, that which they have for me, and that which they have for each other: their mutual goodwill either comes from, or relates to me: I ſee nothing but what ſeems to extend my being, and nothing to divide it. I exiſt in a manner in all thoſe who are about me: my imagination can extend no farther: I have nothing more to deſire: to reflect and to be happy is with me the ſame thing: I live at once in all that I love: I am replete with happineſs, and ſatisfied with life: come, death, when thou wilt! I no longer dread thy power: the meaſure of my life is full, and I have nothing now to experience worth enjoyment. The greater pleaſure I enjoyed in your company the more agreeable is it to me to reflect on it, and the more diſquietude alſo hath every thing given me that might diſturb it. We will for a moment lay aſide that timid morality and pretended devotion, with which you reproach me. You muſt confeſs at leaſt that the ſocial pleaſures we taſted ſprang from that openneſs of heart, by which every thought, every ſentiment, of the one was communicated to the other, and from which every one, conſcious of being what he ought, appeared ſuch as he really was. Let us ſuppoſe now any ſecret intrigue, any connexion neceſſary to

be concealed, any motive of reſerve and ſecreſy intruding on our harmony; that moment the reciprocal pleaſure we felt in ſeeing each other would vaniſh. Shyneſs and reſtraint would enſue; we ſhould no ſooner meet together than we ſhould wiſh to part; and at length circumſpection and decorum would bring on diſtruſt and diſtaſte. It is impoſſible long to love thoſe of whom we are afraid or ſuſpicious. They ſoon become troubleſome——Eloiſa troubleſome!—troubleſome to her friend! No, no, that cannot be; there can be no evils in nature, but ſuch as it is poſſible to ſupport.

In thus freely telling you my ſcruples, I do not pretend, however, to make you change your reſolutions; but to induce you to reconſider the motives on which they are founded; leſt, in taking a ſtep all the conſequences of which you may not foreſee, you might have reaſon to repent at a time when you will not dare retract it. As to Mr. Wolmar's having no fears, it was not his place to fear, but your's. No one is ſo proper a judge of what is to be feared of you, as yourſelf. Conſider the matter well, then; and, if nothing is in reality to be feared, tell me ſo, and I ſhall think of it no more: for I know your ſincerity, and never can diſtruſt your intentions. Your heart may be capable of an accidental errour; but can never be guilty of a premeditated crime, and this it is that makes the diſtinction between a weak man and a wicked one.

Beſides,

Beſides, though my objections had really more weight than I am inclined to think they have, why muſt things be viewed in their moſt diſadvantageous light? Surely there can be no neceſſity for ſuch extreme precautionary meaſures. It cannot be requiſite that you ſhould break through all your projects, and fly from us for ever. Though young in years, you are poſſeſſed of all the experience of age. The tranquillity of mind which ſucceeds the noble paſſion is a ſenſation which increaſes by fruition. A ſuſceptible heart may dread a ſtate of repoſe to which it has been unaccuſtomed; but a little time is ſufficient to reconcile us to our peaceful ſituation, and in a little time more we give it the preference. For my part, I foreſee the hour of your ſecurity to be nearer than you yourſelf imagine. Extremes, you know, never laſt long; you have loved too much not to become in time indifferent: the cinder which is caſt from the furnace can never be lighted again, but before it becomes ſuch the coal muſt be totally burnt out. Be vigilant but for a few years more, and you will then have nothing to fear; your acceptance of my propoſal would at once have removed all danger; but, independent of that view, ſuch an attachment has charms enough to be deſired for its own ſake; and if your delicacy prevents you from cloſing with my propoſals, I have no need to be informed how much ſuch a reſtraint muſt coſt you. At the ſame time, however, I am afraid, that the pre-

tences which impoſe on your reaſon are many of them frivolous: I am afraid, that in piquing yourſelf on the fulfilling of engagements which no longer exiſt, you only make a falſe ſhow of virtue, in a conſtancy for which you are by no means to be commended, and which is at preſent entirely miſplaced. I have already told you, that I think the obſervance of a raſh and criminal vow is an additional crime. If your's were not ſo at firſt, it is become ſo now; and that is ſufficient to annul it. The promiſe which no man ought to break is that of being always a man of virtue, and reſolute in the diſcharge of his duty; to change when that is changed is not levity, but conſtancy. Act at all times as virtue requires you to do, and you will never break your word. But if there be among your ſcruples any ſolid objection, we will examine it at leiſure. In the mean time, I am not very ſorry that you did not embrace my ſcheme with the ſame avidity as I formed it; that my blunder, if it be one, may give you leſs pain. I had meditated this project during the abſence of my couſin, with whom, however, I have ſince had ſome general converſation on the ſubject of a ſecond marriage, and find her ſo averſe to it, that, in ſpite of the regard which I know ſhe has for you, I am afraid I muſt exert a greater authority than becomes me, to overcome her reluctance; for this is a point in which friendſhip ought to reſpect the bent of the inclinations.

I will

I will own nevertheleſs that I ſtill abide by my deſign: it would be ſo agreeable to us all; would ſo honourably extricate you from your preſent precarious ſituation in life; would ſo unite all our intereſts, and make ſo natural an obligation of that friendſhip which is ſo delightful to all, that I cannot think of giving it up entirely. No, my friend, you can never be too nearly allied to me; it is not even enough that you might be my couſin; I could wiſh you were my brother.

Whatever may be the conſequence of theſe notions, do more juſtice to my ſentiments for you. Make uſe without reſerve of my friendſhip, my confidence, and my eſteem. Remember I ſhall not preſcribe any rules to you; nor do I think I have any reaſon to do it. Deny me not, however, the privilege of giving you advice, but imagine not I lay you under any commands. If you think you can ſecurely reſide at Clarens, come hither; ſtay here: you cannot give me greater pleaſure. But, if you think a few years longer abſence neceſſary to cure the ſuſpicious remains of impetuous youth, write to me often in your abſence; come and ſee us as often as you will, and let us cultivate a correſpondence founded on the moſt cordial intimacy.

What pains will not ſuch conſolation alleviate? What abſence will not be ſupportable under the pleaſing hope of at laſt ending our days together! I will do yet more; I am ready

to put one of my children under your care; I ſhall think him ſafer in your hands than my own; and, when you bring him back, I know not which of you will give me the greater pleaſure by your return. On the other hand, if you become entirely reaſonable, baniſh your chimerical notions, and are willing to deſerve my couſin, come, pay her your beſt reſpects, and make her happy. Come then, and ſurmount every obſtacle that oppoſes your ſucceſs, and make a conqueſt of her heart: ſuch aſſiſtance as my friendſhip can give ſhall not on my part be wanting. Come, and make each other happy, and nothing more will be wanting to render me completely ſo. But, whatever reſolution you take, after having maturely conſidered the matter, ſpeak confidently, and affront your friend no more by your groundleſs ſuſpicions.

Let me not, however, in thinking ſo much of you, forget myſelf. My turn to be heard muſt come at laſt; for you act with your friends in a diſpute, as with your adverſaries at cheſs; you defend yourſelf by attacking them. You excuſe your being a philoſopher, by accuſing me of being a devotee. I am, then, in your opinion a devotee, or ready to become one: well, be it ſo. Contemptible denominations never change the nature of things. If devotion is commendable, why am I to blame in being devout? But, perhaps, that epithet is too low for you. The dignity of the philoſopher diſdains the worſhip

of

of the vulgar: it would ſerve God in a more ſublime manner, and raiſe even to Heaven itſelf its pretenſions and its pride. Poor philoſophers!—but to return to myſelf.

I have, from my childhood, reſpected virtue, and have always cultivated my reaſon. I endeavoured to regulate my conduct by human underſtanding and ſentiment, and have been ill conducted. Before you deprive me of the guide I have choſen, give me another on which I may depend. I thought myſelf as wiſe as other people, and yet a thouſand others have lived more prudently than I: they muſt, therefore, have had reſources which I had not. Why is it that I, knowing myſelf well born, have had reaſon to conceal my life and converſation from the world? Why did I hate the ſin which I committed even in ſpite of myſelf? I thought I knew my own ſtrength, I relied on it, and was deceived. All the reſiſtance which was in my own power I think I made; and yet I fell.—How muſt thoſe have done that have eſcaped? they muſt have had a better ſupport.

From their example I was induced to ſeek the ſame ſupport, and have found in it a peculiar advantage which I did not expect. During the reign of the paſſions, they themſelves contribute to the continuance of the anxieties they at firſt occaſion; they retain hope always by the ſide of deſire, and hence we are enabled to ſupport the abſence of felicity: if our expectations are diſappointed, hope ſupplies their place;

and

and the agreeable deluſion laſts as long as the paſſion which gave it birth. Thus, in a ſituation of that kind, paſſion ſupports itſelf, and the very ſollicitude it cauſes is a chimerical pleaſure, which is ſubſtituted for real enjoyment. Nay more, thoſe who have no deſires muſt be very unhappy; they are deprived, if I may be allowed the expreſſion, of all they poſſeſs. We enjoy leſs that which we obtain than that which we hope for, and are ſeldom happy but in expectation. In fact, man, made to deſire every thing and obtain little, of boundleſs avarice, yet narrow capacity, has received of heaven a conſolatory aid, which brings to him in idea every thing he deſires, diſplays to his imagination, repreſents it to his view, and in one ſenſe makes it is own; but to render ſuch imaginary property ſtill more flattering and agreeable, it is even modified to his paſſion. But this ſhadow vaniſhes the moment the real object appears; the imagination can no longer magnify that which we actually poſſeſs; the charms of illuſion ceaſe where thoſe of enjoyment begin. The world of fancy, therefore, the land of chimeras, is the only world worthy to be inhabited; and ſuch is the inanity of human enjoyments that, except that Being which is ſelf-exiſtent, there is nothing delightful but that which has no exiſtence at all.

If this effect does not always follow in the particular objects of our paſſions, it is infallible in the common ſentiment which includes the whole.

whole. To live without pain is incompatible with our ſtate of mortality: it would be in fact to die. He who has every thing in his power, if a creature, muſt be miſerable, as he would be deprived of the pleaſure of deſiring; than which every other want would be more ſupportable*.

This is, indeed, what I have in part experienced ſince my marriage and your return. Every thing around me gives me cauſe of content, and yet I am not contented. A ſecret languor ſteals into the bottom of my heart: I find it puffed up and void, as you formerly ſaid was the caſe with your's: all my attachments are not ſufficient to fill it. This diſquietude, I confeſs, is ſtrange: but it is nevertheleſs true. O my friend! I am indeed too happy: my happineſs is a burthen to me. Can you think of a remedy for this diſguſt? For my part, I muſt own that a ſentiment ſo unreaſonable, and ſo involuntary, has in a great meaſure diminiſhed the value of life, and I cannot imagine what bleſſings it can beſtow which I want, or with which I ſhould be ſatisfied. Can any woman be more ſuſceptible than I am? Can ſhe love her father, her huſband, her children, her friends, her relations better than I do? Can ſhe be more generally beloved? Can ſhe lead a life more agreeable

* Hence it is that every ſovereign who aſpires to be deſpotick, aſpires to the honour of being miſerable. In every kingdom in the world, would you ſee the man who is the moſt unhappy of all his countrymen, go directly to the ſovereign, particularly if he be an abſolute monarch.

agreeable to her taſte? Or can ſhe be more at liberty to exchange it for any other? Can ſhe enjoy better health? Can ſhe have more expedients to divert her, or ſtronger ties to bind her to the world? and yet, notwithſtanding all this, I am conſtantly uneaſy: my heart ſighs after ſomething of which it is entirely ignorant.

Therefore, finding nothing in this globe capable of giving it ſatisfaction, my deſiring ſoul ſeeks an object in another world; in elevating itſelf to the ſource of ſentiment and exiſtence, its languor vaniſhes: it is reanimated; it acquires new ſtrength and new life. It thence obtains a new exiſtence, independent of corporeal paſſions, or rather it exiſts no longer in me, but in the immenſity of the Supreme Being; and, diſencumbered for a while from its terreſtrial ſhackles, returns to them again with patience, conſoled with the expectation of futurity.

You ſmile at all this, my good friend; I underſtand you. I have, indeed, pronounced my own condemnation, having formerly cenſured the heart which I now approve. To this I have only one word to anſwer; and that is, I then ſpoke without experience. I do not pretend to juſtify it in every ſhape. I don't pretend to ſay this viſionary taſte is prudent; I only ſay, it is a delightful ſupplement to that ſenſe of happineſs which in other things exhauſts itſelf by enjoyment. If it be productive of evil, doubtleſs it ought to be rejected; if it deceives the heart by

falſe

falſe pleaſure, it ought alſo on that account to be rejected. But, after all, which has the greater incentive to virtue, the philoſopher with his ſublime maxims, or the Chriſtian with his humble ſimplicity? Who is moſt happy even in this world, the ſage with his profound underſtanding, or the enthuſiaſt with his rapture of devotion! What buſineſs have I to think or imagine, when my faculties are all in a manner alienated? Will you ſay intoxication has its pleaſures; be it ſo, and be mine eſteemed ſuch, if you will. Either leave me in this agreeable delirium, or ſhow me a more delightful ſituation.

I have condemned, indeed, the extaſies of the myſticks, and condemn them ſtill, when they ſerve to detach us from our duty; and by raiſing in us a diſguſt againſt an active life by the charms of contemplation, ſeduce us into that ſtate of quietiſm which you imagine me ſo near; and from which I believe myſelf nevertheleſs to be as far diſtant as you. I know very well that to ſerve God is not to paſs our lives on our knees in prayer; that it is to diſcharge on earth thoſe obligations which our duty requires; it is to do, with a view to pleaſe him, every thing which the ſituation in which he hath placed us demands,

Il cor gradiſce;
E ſerve a lui chi 'l ſuo dovor compiſce.

To have a heart that glows with pure deſire
To love and ſerve where duty may require.

We

We ought firſt to perform the duties of our ſtation, and then pray when we have time. This is the rule I have endeavoured to follow: I don't make that ſelf-examination, with which you reproach me, a taſk, but a recreation: I don't ſee why, among the pleaſures that are within my reach, I ſhould be forbidden the moſt affecting and the moſt innocent of all.

I have examined myſelf with more ſeverity, ſince the receipt of your letter. I have enquired into the effects which the pious inclination that ſo much diſpleaſes you produces in my mind; and I can ſafely ſay, I ſee nothing that ſhould give me reaſon to fear, at leaſt ſo ſoon as you imagine, the evils of exceſſive and ſuperfluous devotion.

In the firſt place, I have not ſo fervent a longing after this exerciſe as to give me pain when I am deprived of an opportunity, nor am I out of humour at every avocation from it. It never interrupts my thoughts in the buſineſs of the day, nor gives me any diſguſt or impatience in the diſcharge of my duty. If retirement be ſometimes neceſſary, it is when I have felt ſome diſagreeable emotion, and am better in my cloſet than elſewhere. It is there that, entering into the examination of myſelf, I recover my temper and eaſe. If any care troubles me, if any pain affects me, it is there I go and lay them down. Every pain, every trouble, vaniſhes before a greater object. In reflecting on all the bounties of Providence towards me, I am aſhamed to be

ſenſible

ſenſible of ſuch trifling ills, and to forget its greater mercies. I require neither frequent nor long intervals of ſolitude. When I am affected by involuntary ſadneſs, the ſhedding a few tears before him who is the comforter of hearts relieves mine in an inſtant. My reflexions are never bitter nor grievous; even my repentance is free from dread: my errours give me leſs cauſe of fear than of ſhame; I regret that I have committed them, but I feel no remorſe, nor dread of their effects. The God I ſerve is a merciful Being; a Father, whoſe goodneſs only affects me, and ſurpaſſes all his other attributes. His power aſtoniſhes me; his immenſity confounds my ideas; his juſtice——but he has made man weak; and though he be juſt, he is merciful. An avenging God is the God of the wicked. I can neither fear him on my own account, nor pray for his vengeance to be exerted againſt any other. It is the God of peace, the God of goodneſs whom I adore. I know, I feel, I am the work of his hands, and truſt to ſee him at the laſt day ſuch as he has manifeſted himſelf to my heart during my life.

It is impoſſible for me to tell you how many pleaſing ideas hence render my days agreeable, and give joy to my heart. In leaving my cloſet in ſuch a diſpoſition, I feel myſelf more light and gay. Every care vaniſhes, every embarraſſment is removed; nothing rough or diſagreeable appears; but all is ſmooth and flowing: every thing wears a pleaſant countenance: it

coſts me no pains to be in good humour: I love thoſe better whom I loved before, and am ſtill more agreeable to them: even my huſband is more pleaſed with the diſpoſition which is the effect of ſuch rational devotion. Devotion, he ſays, is the opium of the ſoul. When taken in ſmall quantities, it enlivens, it animates, it ſupports it: a ſtronger doſe lulls it to ſleep, enrages, or deſtroys it. I hope I ſhall never proceed to ſuch extremes.

You ſee I am not ſo much offended at the title of devotee, as perhaps you expected; but then I do not value it at the rate you imagine: yet I would not have the term *devotion* applyed to any affected external deportment, and to a ſort of employment which diſpenſes with every other. Thus that Mrs. Guyon you mention had in my opinion done better to have carefully diſcharged her duty as miſtreſs of her family, to have educated her children in the chriſtian faith, and to have governed her ſervants prudently, than to have compoſed books of devotion, diſputed with biſhops, and at laſt be impriſoned in the Baſtile, for her unintelligible reveries.

I approve juſt as little of that myſtical and metaphorical language, which feeds the heart with chimeras, and in the place of ſpiritual love ſubſtitutes ſentiments too nearly allied to carnal affections, and too apt to excite them. The more ſuſceptible the heart, or lively the imagination, the more we ought to be on our guard againſt thoſe images by which they may be affected;

affected; for how can we ſee the relations of the myſtical object if we do not at the ſame time ſee the ſenſual; and how can a modeſt woman have the aſſurance to contemplate thoſe objects in her imagination which ſhe would bluſh to look on.

But what ſets me moſt againſt theſe devotees by profeſſion, is that affectation of manners which renders them inſenſible to humanity; that exceſſive pride which makes them look down with pity on the reſt of mankind. If ever they condeſcend to ſtoop from their imaginary elevation to do an act of charity, it is always done in a manner extremely mortifying to the object: their pity is ſo cruel and inſulting, their juſtice is ſo rigid, their charity ſo ſevere, their zeal ſo bitter, their contempt ſo much like hatred, that even the inſenſibility of the reſt of the world is leſs cruel than their pity. Their love for heaven ſerves them as an excuſe for loving nobody on earth; they have even no affection for one another; nor is there an inſtance of ſincere friendſhip to be found among people of extreme devotion. The more detached they affect to be from the world, the more they expect from it; and one would think their devotion to God is exerted only that they may have a pretext to exerciſe his authority over the reſt of his creatures.

I have ſuch an averſion for all abuſes of this kind as ſhould naturally be my ſecurity: if nevertheleſs I am doomed to fall, it will not be voluntarily, and I hope, from the friendſhip of thoſe

thoſe who are about me, that it will not be without warning. I muſt own, I now think that it was poſſible for my former inquietude concerning my huſband to have effected ſuch a change. Happily, the prudent letter of my Lord B——, to which you very reaſonably refer me, together with his ſenſible and conſolatory converſation, as well as your's, have entirely diſſipated my fears, and changed my principles. I now ſee plainly that an intolerating ſpirit muſt by degrees become obdurate. For what charity can be long preſerved for thoſe who we think muſt inevitably be damned? To love them would be to hate God for puniſhing them. To act then on principles of humanity, we muſt take upon ourſelves, to condemn actions only, and not men. Let us not aſſume the horrible function of devils. Let us not ſo lightly throw open the gates of hell for our fellow-creatures. Alas! if all thoſe are deſtined to be eternally miſerable who deceive themſelves, where is the mortal who can avoid it?

O my friends! of what a load have you eaſed my heart? in teaching me that an errour in judgement is no crime, you have delivered me from a thouſand tormenting ſcruples. I leave to others the ſubtile interpretation of dogmas which I do not comprehend, and content myſelf with thoſe glaring truths which ſtrike and at once convince me; thoſe practical truths which inſtruct me in my duty. As to any thing further, I abide by the rule of your old

anſwer

anſwer to Mr. Wolmar. A man is not maſter of his own ſentiments to believe or diſbelieve what he pleaſes. Can it be a crime for one not to be a logician? No, it is not the buſineſs of conſcience to inſtruct us in the truth of things, but in the maxims of our duty. It does not teach us to reaſon well, but to act aright. In what can my huſband be criminal before God? Does he turn his eyes from the contemplation of the Deity? God himſelf hath hid his face from his view. He does not ſhun the truth; the truth avoids him. He is not actuated by pride; he does not ſeek to convert any one to his own opinion. He is glad they are of a different one. He approves of our ſentiments, he wiſhes he had the ſame, but cannot. He is deprived of our conſolations and our hopes. He acts uprightly, without even expecting a recompenſe: he is in fact more virtuous, more diſintereſted than we. He is indeed truely to be pitied! but wherefore ſhould he be puniſhed? No: goodneſs, ſincerity, honeſty, virtue, theſe are what heaven requires, and what he will undoubtedly reward: theſe conſtitute the true ſervice which the Deity requires, and that ſervice Mr. Wolmar moſt invariably performs. If God judges of our faith by our works, to be truely virtuous is to believe in him. A true chriſtian is a virtuous man: the real infidels are the vicious.

Be not ſurpriſed, therefore, my dear friend, that I do not diſpute with you many particulars of your letter, concerning which we are not of the

the ſame opinion. I know too well what you are, to be in pain about what you believe. What do all thoſe idle queſtions about free-agency concern me? Whether I myſelf have the power to do good, or can obtain it by prayer, if in the end I am enabled to do it, does it not amount to the ſame thing? Whether I acquire what is wanting by aſking for it, or the Deity grants it to my prayers, if it be neceſſary to aſk in order to have it, is not this a ſufficient explanation? Happy enough to agree about the principal articles of our faith, why need we enquire farther? ought we to be deſirous of penetrating into the bottomleſs abyſs of metaphyſicks, and, in diſputing about the divine eſſence, throw away the ſhort time which is allotted us here to revere and honour the Deity? We are ignorant what he is; but we know that he exiſts, and that is ſufficient: he manifeſts himſelf in his works, we feel him conſtantly within us. We may diſpute, but cannot ſincerely diſbelieve his exiſtence. He has given us that degree of ſenſibility which enables us to perceive, to embrace him; let us pity thoſe to whom he has not imparted ſuch a portion of ſuſceptibility, without flattering ourſelves that we ſhall be able to make them ſenſible of what they cannot feel. Let us reſpect his decrees in ſilence, and do our duty: this is the beſt method to make proſelytes.

Do you know any man of better ſenſe or a more enlightened underſtanding than Mr. Wolmar?

mar? Do you know any one more ſincere, more upright, more juſt, leſs ſubject to the controul of his paſſions; who will be a greater gainer by divine juſtice or the ſoul's immortality? Do you know any man more nervous, more ſublime, more convincing in a diſpute than Lord B———? Is there any perſon by his virtue more worthy of entering on the defenſe of the cauſe of God, more certain of his exiſtence, more ſincerely penetrated with the idea of divine majeſty, more zealous for his glory, and more capable of ſupporting it? Yet you have been a witneſs of what paſſed during three months at Clarens: you have ſeen two men, having the higheſt eſteem and reſpect for each other, and equally diſdainful of the pedantry and quirk of ſcholaſtick logick, paſs a whole winter in prudent and peaceful as well as lively and profound argumentations, with a view to convert each other; you have ſeen them attack and defend themſelves, and take every advantage of which human underſtanding is capable; and that on a ſubject wherein both, being equally intereſted, deſired nothing ſo earneſtly as to be of one mind.

What was the conſequence? their mutual eſteem is augmented, and yet both retain their former ſentiments: if ſuch an example does not for ever cure a prudent man of the rage of diſpute, the love of truth I am ſure never will.

For my part, I have thrown aſide, and that for ever, ſuch an uſeleſs weapon; and am

determined never to mention a ſingle word more to my huſband about religion, unleſs it be to give a reaſon for mine. Not that a notion of divine toleration has rendered me indifferent to his. I muſt confeſs, that though I am become tranquil about his future ſtate I do not find I am the leſs zealous for his converſion. I would lay down my life to ſee him once convinced of the truth of divine revelation, if not for the ſake of his future happineſs, at leaſt for his happineſs in this life. For, of how many pleaſures is he not on this account deprived? What ſentiments can give him comfort in his afflictions? What ſpectator excites him to thoſe good deeds he performs in ſecret? What reward does he hope for from his virtue? How can he look upon death? No, I hope he will not meet it in this terrible ſituation. There remains but one expedient more for me to try to prevent it; and to that I conſecrate the remainder of my life. This is not to convince, but to affect him: to ſet him a prevailing example, and to make religion ſo amiable, that he ſhall not be able to reſiſt her charms. Ah! my friend! what a forcible argument againſt infidelity is the life of a true chriſtian? Do you believe there is a being on earth proof againſt it? This is the taſk I impoſe on myſelf for the future; aſſiſt me to perform it. Mr. Wolmar is cold, but not inſenſible. What a picture might we lay open to his heart? his friends, his children, his wife, all uniting to his edification. When, without

out preaching about God in our diſcourſes, we ſhall demonſtrate him by thoſe actions which he inſpires, by thoſe virtues of which he is the authour, by the pleaſure we take in his ſervice: when he ſhall ſee a ſketch of paradiſe in his own houſe; when an hundred times a day he ſhall be compelled to cry out: "Human nature is of itſelf incapable of this; ſomething divine muſt prevail here."

If my enterpriſe pleaſes you, if you find yourſelf worthy to concur in it, come, and let us paſs our days together, and never part more till death. If the project diſpleaſes or frightens you, liſten to the dictates of your conſcience; that will teach you your duty. I have no more to ſay. Agreeably to what Lord B—— intimates, I ſhall expect you both towards the latter end of next month. You will hardly know your apartment again; but in the alteration made in it you will diſcover the care of a good friend, who took a pleaſure in ornamenting it for you. You will find there, alſo, a ſmall aſſortment of books, which ſhe bought for you at Geneva, of a better taſte than the *Adonis*; not but that, for the jeſt's ſake, you will find that too. You muſt, however, be diſcreet; for, as ſhe would not have you know this is her doing, I haſten to finiſh my letter before ſhe comes to forbid my ſpeaking of it. Adieu, my dear friend; our party of pleaſure to the caſtle of Chillon will take place to-morrow without you. It will not be the better for that. The bailiff

has invited us with our children, which leaves me no excuſe; but I know not why, and yet I cannot help wiſhing we were ſafe returned.

LETTER CLIX.

FROM FANNY ANNET.

O Sir! O my benefactor! what tidings do they order me to write to you! Madam—my poor miſtreſs—good God! methinks I ſee already how frightened you are! but you cannot ſee the affliction we are all in here.——But I have not a moment to loſe—I muſt tell you. —I muſt run—Oh! that I had already told you all!—what will become of you, when you know our misfortune! The whole family went out yeſterday to dine at Chillon. The Baron, who was going into Savoy, to ſpend ſome days at the caſtle of Blonay, went away after dinner.

The company attended him a little way, and afterwards walked along the dyke. Mrs. Orbe and the bailiff's lady went before with my maſter; my miſtreſs followed, having hold by one hand of Harriet, and by the other of Marcellin. I came after with the eldeſt. His honour, the bailiff, who had ſtaid behind to ſpeak to ſomebody, came up; and joining the company, offered my miſtreſs his arm; which, in order to accept of, ſhe ſent Marcellin to me. I ran forward to meet him, while the child did the ſame towards me; but in running, his foot ſlipped, and he fell unhappily into the water. I

ſcreamed

ſcreamed out, when my miſtreſs, turning her head, and ſeeing the child in the water, flew back in an inſtant, and threw herſelf in after him.

Unhappy that I am! why did I not throw myſelf in too! better had I been drowned on the ſpot! With difficulty I kept the eldeſt from leaping after its mother; who kept ſtruggling with the other in her arms.——No boat nor people were at hand, ſo that ſome time paſſed before they could be got out of the water—— the child ſoon recovered; but as for the mother ——the fright, the fall, the condition ſhe was in—ah! none knows better than I the danger of ſuch a fall! ſhe was taken out, and remained a good while inſenſible. The moment ſhe came to herſelf, ſhe enquired eagerly after the child—heavens! with what tranſport did ſhe embrace him! I thought ſhe was quite well again; but her ſpirits laſted her but for a moment: ſhe inſiſted on being brought home, but fainted away ſeveral times during the journey. By ſome orders ſhe gave me, I ſaw ſhe believed ſhe ſhould not recover. Her fears were, alas! too true! ſhe will never recover. Mrs. Orbe is a good deal more altered than ſhe. They are all diſtracted; I am the moſt ſenſible in the whole houſe.——Why ſhould I be uneaſy? ah! my good miſtreſs, if I loſe you I ſhall never have occaſion for another.——O my dear Sir! may heaven enable you to ſupport this trial! Adieu! the phyſician is this moment coming out

of the chamber. I muſt run to meet him—if he gives me hopes, I will let you know it. If I ſay nothing, you will know too well the cauſe.

LETTER CLX.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

IMPRUDENT, unfortunate man! unhappy dreamer! you will now indeed never ſee her more—alas! the veil—Eloiſa is no more.——

She has herſelf written to you—I refer you to her letter: reſpect, I charge you, her laſt requeſt. Great and many are the obligations you have to diſcharge on this ſide the grave.——

LETTER CLXI.

FROM MR. WOLMAR.

I Was unwilling to interrupt the firſt tranſports of your grief: my writing to you would but have aggravated your ſorrow, as I was no better qualified to relate than you to read our ſad tale. At preſent, poſſibly, ſuch a relation may not be diſagreeable to both. As nothing remains but the rememberance of her, my heart takes a delight in recalling every token of that rememberance to my mind. You will have ſome conſolation in ſhedding tears to her memory; but of that grand relief of the unfortunate I am conſtitutionally deprived, and am therefore more unhappy than you.

It

It is not, however, of her illneſs, but of herſelf, I would write. Another might have thrown herſelf into the water to ſave her child. Such an accident, her fever, her death are natural; and may be common to other mortals: but the employment of her laſt moments, her converſation, her ſentiments, her fortitude, all theſe are peculiar to Eloiſa. She was no leſs ſingular in the hour of death than ſhe had been during the whole courſe of her life; and as I was the ſole witneſs to many particulars, you can learn them from me alone.

You already know that her fright, her agitation, the fall, and the water ſhe had imbibed, threw her into fainting fits, from which ſhe did not recover till after ſhe was brought home. On being carried into the houſe, ſhe aſked again for the child; the child was brought; and, ſeeing him walk about, and return her careſſes, ſhe became apparently eaſy, and conſented to take a little reſt. Her ſleep was but ſhort, and as the phyſician was not yet come, ſhe made us ſit round on the bed; that is, Fanny, her couſin, and me. She talked to us about her children, of the great diligence and care which her plan of education required, and of the danger of a moment's neglect. Without making her illneſs of any great importance, ſhe foreſaw, ſhe ſaid, that it would prevent her for ſome time from diſcharging her part of that duty, and charged us to divide it amongſt us.

She enlarged on her own projects, on your's, on the moſt proper means to carry them into execution; on the obſervations ſhe had made as to what would promote or injure them: and, in a word, on every thing which might enable us to ſupply her place, in the diſcharge of the duties of a mother, ſo long as ſhe might be prevented from it herſelf. I thought ſo much precaution unneceſſary for one who imagined ſhe ſhould be prevented from exerciſing ſuch employment only for a few days: but what added to my apprehenſions, was to hear her enter into a long and particular charge reſpecting Harriet. As to her ſons, ſhe contented herſelf with what concerned their education in the earlieſt infancy, as if relying on another for the care of their youth.

But in ſpeaking of Harriet ſhe went farther, extending her remarks even to her coming of age; and, being ſenſible that nothing could ſupply the place of thoſe reflexions which her own experience dictated, ſhe gave us a clear and methodical abſtract of the plan of education ſhe had laid down, recommending it to the mother in the moſt lively and affecting manner.

All theſe exhortations, reſpecting the education of young perſons and the duty of mothers, mixed with frequent applications to herſelf, could not fail to render the converſation extremely intereſting: I ſaw, indeed, that it affected her too much. In the mean time, her couſin held one of her

her hands, preſſing it every now and then to her lips, and bathing it with tears, at every reply: Fanny was not leſs moved; and as for Eloiſa herſelf, I obſerved the big tears ſwell out of her eyes, and ſteal down her cheeks; but ſhe was afraid to let us ſee ſhe wept, leſt it ſhould alarm us. But I then ſaw that ſhe knew her life was drawing towards its final period. My only hope was, that her fears might deceive her, and repreſent the danger greater than it really was. Unhappily, however, I knew her too well to build much upon ſuch a deception. I endeavoured ſeveral times to ſtop her, and at laſt begged of her not to waſte her ſpirits by talking ſo much at once on a ſubject which might be continued at our leiſure. "Ah! my dear (replied ſhe) don't you know that nothing hurts a woman ſo much as ſilence? and, ſince I find myſelf a little feveriſh, I may as well employ my diſcourſe about uſeful matters, as prattle away the time about trifles."

The arrival of the phyſician put the whole houſe into a confuſion which it is impoſſible to deſcribe. All the domeſticks were gathered about the door of the chamber, where they waited with their arms folded, and anxious looks, to know his opinion of their miſtreſs's ſituation, as if their own deſtiny were depending. This ſight threw poor Mrs. Orbe into ſuch an agony of grief, that I began to be afraid of her ſenſes. Under different pretenſes, therefore, I diſmiſſed them, that their preſence might no longer affect

her. The phyſician gave us indeed a little hope, but in ſuch vague terms, that it ſerved to convince me there was none. Eloiſa was alſo reſerved, on account of her couſin. When the doctor left the chamber I followed him, which Clara was alſo going to do; but Eloiſa detained her, and gave me a wink which I underſtood, and, therefore, immediately told the phyſician, that if there were any real danger he ſhould as carefully conceal it from Mrs. Orbe as from the patient, leſt her deſpair ſhould render her incapable of attending her friend. He told me the caſe was indeed dangerous, but that four-and-twenty hours being hardly elapſed ſince the accident, it required more time to form a certain judgement; that the ſucceeding night might determine the fate of the patient; but that he could not poſitively pronounce any thing till the third day. Fanny alone was by on his ſaying this, on whom we prevailed with ſome difficulty to ſtifle her emotions, and agreed upon what was proper to tell Mrs. Orbe and the reſt of the family.

Towards the evening, Eloiſa prevailed with her couſin, who had ſat up with her the preceding night, and was deſirous of continuing her vigilance, to go to bed for ſome hours. In the mean time, the patient being informed that ſhe was to be bled in the foot, and that the phyſician was preſcribing for her, ſhe ſent for him to her bed-ſide, and addreſſed him thus:

"Mr. Bouſſon, when it is neceſſary to flatter "a timid patient as to the danger of his caſe, "the precaution is humane, and I approve of "it; but it is a piece of cruelty to laviſh equally "on all the diſagreeable remedies which to "many may be ſuperfluous. Preſcribe for me "every thing that you think will be really uſe-"ful, and I will punctually follow your pre-"ſcriptions. But as to thoſe of mere experi-"ment, I beg you will excuſe me: it is my "body and not my mind which is diſordered; "and I am not afraid to end my days, but to "miſpend thoſe which remain. The laſt mo-"ments of life are too precious to be thrown "away. If you cannot prolong mine, there-"fore, I beg you will at leaſt not ſhorten them, "by preventing me from employing them as "I ought. Either recover me entirely, or "leave me: I can die alone."— Thus, my friend, did this woman, ſo mild and timid on ordinary occaſions, know how to exert herſelf in a reſolute and ſerious manner at this important criſis.

The night was cruel and deciſive. Suffocation, oppreſſion, fainting, her ſkin dry and burning. An ardent fever tormented her, during the continuance of which ſhe was heard frequently to call out *Marcellin*, as if to prevent his running into the water, and to pronounce alſo another name, formerly repeated on a like occaſion. The next day the phyſician told me plainly, that he did not think ſhe could live three

days. I alone was made privy to this afflicting piece of information, and the moſt terrible hour of my life was that wherein I kept it a ſecret in my breaſt, without knowing what uſe to make of it. I ſtrayed out alone into the garden, muſing on the meaſures I ought to take; not without many afflicting reflexions on the misfortune of being reduced, in the laſt ſtage of life, to that ſolitude, of which I was ſufficiently tired even before I had experienced a more agreeable one.

I had promiſed Eloiſa, the night before, to tell her faithfully the opinion of the phyſician, and ſhe had engaged me by every prevailing argument to keep my word. I felt that engagement on my conſcience: but what to do I was greatly at a loſs! Shall I, ſaid I to myſelf, in order to diſcharge an uſeleſs and chimerical duty, afflict her ſoul with the news, and lengthen the pangs of death? To tell her the hour of her diſſolution, is it not in fact to anticipate the fatal moment? In ſo ſhort an interval what will become of the deſires, the hopes, the elements of life? Shall I kill my Eloiſa?

Thus meditating on what I ſhould do, I walked on with long and haſty ſtrides, and in an agitation of mind I had never before experienced. It was not in my power to ſhake off the painful anxiety: it remained an inſupportable weight on my ſpirits. At length I was determined by a ſudden thought.

For

For whoſe ſake, ſaid I, do I deliberate? for her's or for mine? On whoſe principles do I reaſon? is it on her ſyſtem or my own? What demonſtration have I of the truth? In ſupport of her ſyſtem ſhe alſo has nothing but opinion; but that opinion carries with it the force of evidence, and is in her eyes a demonſtration. What right have I, in a matter which relates chiefly to her, to prefer my opinion, which I acknowledge to be doubtful, to her's, which ſhe thinks demonſtrated? Let us compare the conſequence of both. According to her's, her diſpoſition in the laſt hour of her life will decide her fate to all eternity. According to mine, all that I can do for her will be a matter of indifference in three days. According to my ſyſtem, ſhe will be then inſenſible to every thing: but if ſhe be in the right, what a difference will there be! eternal happineſs or miſery, perhaps——that word is terrible——wretch! riſk thy own ſoul, and not her's.

This was the firſt doubt I ever had concerning that ſcepticiſm you have ſo often attacked; but it was not the laſt. This doubt, however, freed me from the other. I immediately reſolved, and for fear my mind ſhould change, ran directly to Eloiſa's chamber, where, after diſmiſſing every body from their attendance, I ſat down by her bed-ſide. I did not make uſe of thoſe trifling precautions which are neceſſary with little minds. I was indeed for ſome time ſilent; but ſhe looked at me, and ſeemed to read my

my thoughts. Then holding out her hand, "Do you think (ſaid ſhe) you bring me news? No, my dear friend, I know it already; the cold hand of death is upon me; we muſt part for ever."

She proceeded, and continued with me a long converſation, of which I may one day give you an account; and during which ſhe engraved her teſtament on my heart. If I had indeed been ignorant of her diſpoſition before, her temper of mind at this time would ſufficiently have informed me.

She aſked me if her danger was known in the houſe. I told her, every one was greatly apprehenſive; but that they knew nothing for certain; and that the phyſician had acquainted me only with his opinion. On this ſhe conjured me carefully to keep it a ſecret for the remainder of the day. "Clara (continued ſhe) will not be able to ſupport this ſtroke, unleſs it comes from my hand. I ſhall take upon me that afflicting office to-night. It is chiefly for this reaſon that I deſired to have the advice of a phyſician, that I might not ſubject her unneceſſarily, and merely on my own ſuggeſtions, to ſo cruel a trial. Take care that ſhe may know nothing of it before the time, or you will certainly riſk the loſs of a friend, and your children that of a mother."

She then aſked me after her father. I owned that I had ſent an expreſs to him: but took care to conceal from her, that the meſſenger, inſtead

of

of contenting himſelf with delivering my letter, as I had ordered him, blundered out a ſtory, from which my old friend, falſely collecting that his daughter was drowned, fell down ſtairs in a ſwoon, and hurt himſelf; ſo that he kept his bed at Blonay. The hopes of ſeeing her father affected her very ſenſibly; and the certainty I had of the vanity of ſuch hope had no ſmall ſhare in my uneaſineſs.

The paroxyſms of the preceding night had rendered her extremely weak: nor did this long converſation at all increaſe her ſtrength. In this feeble ſituation, therefore, ſhe ſtrove to get a little ſleep in the day-time; nor did I know, till two days after, that ſhe did not ſleep the whole time. The family continued in great anxiety; every one waiting in mournful ſilence for each other to remove their uneaſineſs, yet, without daring to aſk any queſtions, for fear of being told more than they wiſhed to know. If there were any good news, they ſaid to themſelves, every one would be eager enough to tell it; and the bad we ſhall know but too ſoon. In this terrible ſuſpenſe they were ſatisfied, ſo long as they heard of no alteration for the worſe. Amidſt this dreadful ſilence, Mrs. Orbe only was active and talkative. As ſoon as ſhe came out of Eloiſa's chamber, inſtead of going to reſt, ſhe ran up and down the houſe, aſking what the doctor ſaid to the one and to the other. She had ſat up all the preceding night, and could not be ignorant of what ſhe had

had ſeen; but ſhe ſtrove even to impoſe on herſelf, and to diſtruſt the evidence of her ſenſes. Thoſe ſhe interrogated always giving her favourable anſwers, encouraged her to aſk others, which ſhe continued to do with ſuch an air of ſollicitude and poignant diſtreſs, that whoever had known the truth could not have been prevailed upon to tell it her.

In the preſence of Eloiſa ſhe concealed her anxiety, and, indeed, the affecting object which ſhe had before her eyes was ſufficiently afflicting to ſuppreſs her vivacity. She was above all things ſollicitous to hide her fears from Eloiſa; but ſhe could very ill conceal them. Her trouble even appeared in her affectation to hide it. Eloiſa, on her part alſo, ſpared no pains to deceive her couſin, as to the true ſtate of her caſe. Without making light of her illneſs, ſhe affected to ſpeak of it as a thing that was already paſt, ſeeming uneaſy only at the time neceſſary to reſtore her. How greatly did I ſuffer, to ſee them mutually ſtriving to comfort each other, while I knew that neither of them entertained that hope in their own breaſts with which each endeavoured to inſpire the other.

Mrs. Orbe had ſat up the two preceding nights, and had not been undreſſed for three days. Eloiſa propoſed, therefore, that ſhe ſhould retire to her own bed: but ſhe refuſed. "Well then (ſaid Eloiſa) let a little bed be made up for you in my chamber; if (added ſhe, as if

if ſhe had juſt thought of it) you will not take part of mine. Come, my dear (ſays ſhe) what ſay you? I am not worſe, and, if you have no objection, you ſhall ſleep with me." This propoſal was accepted. For my part, they turned me out of the room, and really I ſtood in need of reſt.

I roſe early the next morning; and, being anxious for what might have paſſed in the night, as ſoon as I heard them ſtirring, I went into her chamber. From the ſituation in which Mrs. Orbe appeared the preceding evening, I expected to find her extremely agitated. In entering the room, however, I ſaw her ſitting on the ſettee, ſpiritleſs and pale, or rather of a livid complexion; her eyes heavy and dead; yet ſhe appeared calm and tranquil, but ſpoke little. As for Eloiſa, ſhe appeared leſs feeble than over-night; the tone of her voice was ſtrong, and her geſture animated: ſhe ſeemed indeed to have borrowed the vivacity of her couſin. I could eaſily perceive, however, that this promiſing appearance was in a great meaſure the effect of the fever; but I remarked alſo in her looks, that ſomething had given her a ſecret joy, which contributed to it not a little; but of which I could not diſcover the cauſe. The phyſician confirmed his former opinion, the patient continued alſo in the ſame ſentiments, and there remained no hope.

Being obliged to leave her for ſome time, I obſerved, in coming again into her apartment, that

that every thing appeared in great order. She had cauſed flower-pots to be placed on the chimney-piece; her curtains were half open and tied back; the air of the room was changed; a grateful odour every where diffuſing itſelf, ſo that no one would have taken it for the bed-chamber of a ſick perſon. The ſame taſte and elegance appeared alſo in her deſhabille; all which gave her rather the air of a woman of quality, waiting to receive company, than of a country lady, who was preparing for her laſt moments. She ſaw my ſurpriſe, ſmiled at it, and gueſſing my ſentiments, was going to ſpeak to me, when the children were brought into the room. Theſe now engaged her attention; and you may judge whether, finding herſelf ready to part from them for ever, her careſſes were cold or moderate. I even took notice that ſhe turned oftener, and with more warmth, to him who was the cauſe of her death, as if he was become more dear to her on that account.

Theſe embraces, ſighs, and tranſports were all myſterious to the poor children. They loved her indeed tenderly; but it was with that tenderneſs peculiar to their age. They comprehended nothing of her condition, of the repetition of her careſſes, of her regret at never ſeeing them more: as they ſaw us ſorrowful and affected, they wept; but knew nothing more. We may teach children to repeat the word death; but we cannot give them any idea of it; they neither fear it for themſelves or others; they

they fear to ſuffer pain, but not to die. When the exceſs of pain drew complaints from their poor mother, they pierced the air with their cries; but when we talked to them of loſing her, they ſeemed ſtupid, and comprehended nothing. Harriet alone, being a little older than the others, and of a ſex in which underſtanding and ſentiment appear earlier than in the other, ſeemed troubled and frightened to ſee her little mama in bed, whom ſhe uſed always to ſee ſtirring about with her children. I remember that, on this occaſion, Eloiſa made a reflexion quite in character, on the ridiculous vanity of Veſpaſian, who kept his bed ſo long as he was able to do any thing, and roſe when he could do no more*. "I know not (ſays ſhe) if it be neceſſary that an emperour ſhould die out of his bed: but this I know, that the mother of a family ſhould never take to her bed, unleſs to die."

After having wept over the children, and taken every one of them apart, particularly Harriet, whom ſhe kept ſome time, and who lamented and ſobbed grievouſly, ſhe called them all three together, gave them her bleſſing, and, pointing to Mrs. Orbe, "Go, my children

* This is not quite exact. Suetonius tells us that Veſpaſian employed himſelf as uſual, and gave audience on his death-bed: but perhaps he had done better to have riſen to give audience, and to have gone to bed again to die. This I know, that Veſpaſian, if not a great man, was at leaſt a great prince; but it is not a time to put on the comedian at the hour of death.

ren (ſaid ſhe) go, and throw yourſelves at the feet of your mother: this is ſhe whom Providence has given you, depriving you of nothing in taking me." Immediately they all ran to her, threw themſelves on their knees, and, laying hold of her hands, called her their good mama, their ſecond mother. Clara ſtooped forward to embrace them, but ſtrove in vain to ſpeak; ſhe could only utter a few broken and imperfect exclamations, amidſt ſighs and ſobs that ſtifled her voice. Judge if Eloiſa was not moved! the ſcene indeed became too affecting: for which reaſon I interrupted it.

As ſoon as it was over, we ſat down again round the bed; and, though the vivacity of Eloiſa was a little ſuppreſſed by the foregoing ſcene, ſhe preſerved the ſame air of content in her looks: ſhe talked on every ſubject with all that attention and regard which beſpeaks a mind at eaſe; nothing eſcaped her; ſhe was as intent on the converſation as if ſhe had nothing elſe to think of. She propoſed that we ſhould dine in her chamber, that ſhe might have as much of our company as poſſible for the ſhort time ſhe had to live: you may believe this propoſal was not on our part rejected.

The dinner was ſerved up without noiſe, confuſion, or diſorder, but with as much regularity as if it had been in the Apollo. Fanny and the children dined with us. Eloiſa, taking notice that every one wanted an appetite, had the art to prevail on us to eat of almoſt every thing; one

one time by pretending to inſtruct the cook, at another by aſking whether ſhe might not venture to taſte this or that, and then by recommending it to us to take care of our health, without which we ſhould not be capable of doing her the ſervice her illneſs required. In ſhort, no miſtreſs of a family, however ſolicitous to do the honours of her houſe, could in full health have ſhown, even to ſtrangers, more obliging or more amiable marks of her kindneſs than thoſe which dying Eloiſa expreſſed for her family. Nothing of what I expected happened, nothing of what really happened ever entered my head. In ſhort, I was loſt in aſtoniſhment.

After dinner, word was brought up that the clergyman was come. He came as a friend to the family, as he often favoured us with a viſit. Though I had not ſent for him, as Eloiſa did not requeſt it, I muſt confeſs to you, I was pleaſed to hear he was come, and imagine the moſt zealous believer could not on the ſame occaſion have welcomed him with greater pleaſure. His preſence, indeed, promiſed the removal of many of my doubts, and ſome relief from my perplexity.

You will recollect the motives for my telling her of her approaching end. By the effect which, according to my notions, ſuch a ſhocking piece of information ſhould have had on her, how could I conceive that which it really had? How could I imagine that a woman, ſo devout as

not to paſs a day when in health without meditation, who made the exerciſe of prayer her delight and amuſement, ſhould at ſuch a time as this, when ſhe had but two days to live; when ſhe was juſt ready to appear before her aweful judge, inſtead of making peace with God and her conſcience, amuſe herſelf in ornamenting her chamber, chatting with her friends, and diverting them at their meals, without ever dropping a word concerning God's grace, or her own ſalvation? What could I think of her, and her real ſentiments? How could I reconcile her conduct with the notions I had entertained of her piety? How could I reconcile the uſe ſhe made of her laſt moments to what ſhe had ſaid to the phyſician of their great importance? All this appeared to me an inexplicable enigma; for though I did not expect to find her practiſing all the hypocritical airs of the devotees, it ſeemed to me, however, high time to think of what ſhe judged of ſo much importance, and that it ſhould ſuffer no delay. If one is devout amidſt the noiſe and hurry of life, how can one be otherwiſe at the moment we are going to quit it, and when there remains no longer time to think of another?

Theſe reflexions led me farther than I thought I ever ſhould proceed. I began to be uneaſy; leſt my opinions, indiſcreetly maintained, might at length have gained too much opon her belief. I had not adopted her's, and yet I was not willing that ſhe ſhould have renounced them.

Had

Had I been ſick, I ſhould certainly have died in my own way of thinking, but I was deſirous that ſhe ſhould die alſo in her's. Theſe contradictory notions will appear to you very extravagant: I myſelf do not find them very reaſonable: they were, however, ſuch as really ſuggeſted themſelves, at that time. I do not undertake to juſtify, I only relate them.

At length the time drew near, when my doubts were to be cleared up: for it was eaſy to ſee that, ſooner or later, the miniſter would turn the converſation on the object of his duty; and though Eloiſa had been capable of diſguiſing her ſentiments, it would be too difficult for her to do it in ſuch a manner that a perſon, attentive and prepoſſeſſed as I was, ſhould not ſee through the diſguiſe.

It ſoon after happened as I expected. To paſs over, however, the common-place compliments with which this worthy clergyman introduced the ſubject, as well as the affecting manner in which he repreſented the happineſs of crowning a well-ſpent life by a chriſtian exit; he added, that he had indeed remembered her to have maintained opinions, on ſome points, different from thoſe of the church, or ſuch as may be moſt reaſonably deduced from the ſacred writings; but that, as ſhe had never perſiſted in defending them, he hoped ſhe would die, as ſhe had lived, in the communion of the faithful, and acquieſce in all the particulars of their common confeſſion.

As Eloiſa's anſwer removed at once all my doubts, and differed a good deal from the common-place diſcourſes on ſuch occaſions, I ſhall give it you almoſt word for word; for I liſtened to it very attentively, and committed it to paper immediately after.

"Permit me, Sir (ſaid ſhe) to begin by "thanking you for all the care you have taken "to conduct me in the paths of virtue and "chriſtianity, and for that complacency with "which you have borne with my errours when "I have gone aſtray. Filled with a due re-"ſpect for your zeal, as well as gratitude for "all your goodneſs, I declare with pleaſure "that it is to you I am indebted for all my "good reſolutions, and that you have always "directed me to do what was right, and to be-"lieve what was true.

"I have lived and I die in the proteſtant "communion, whoſe maxims are deduced from "ſcripture and reaſon; concerning which my "heart hath always confirmed what my lips "uttered; and though I may not have had al-"ways that docility in regard to your precepts "which perhaps I ought, it has ariſen from "my averſion to all kind of hypocriſy: that "which I could not believe I could never pro-"feſs; I have always ſincerely ſought what "was moſt conformable to truth, and the glory "of my Creator. I may have been deceived in "my reſearch; not having the vanity to think "I have always been in the right. I may,

"indeed,

" indeed, have been conſtantly in the wrong;
" but my intention has been invariably good.
" This was as much as was in my own power.
" If God did not vouchſafe to enlighten my
" underſtanding farther, he is too merciful and
" juſt to demand of me an account of what he
" has not committed to my care.

" This, Sir, is all I think neceſſary to ſay on
" the opinions I profeſs. As to the reſt, let
" my preſent ſituation anſwer for me. With
" my head diſtracted by illneſs, and ſubjected to
" the delirium of a fever, is it now a proper
" time to endeavour to reaſon better than I did
" when in health, when my underſtanding
" was unimpaired, and as ſound as I received it
" from my Maker?—If I was deceived then,
" am I leſs ſubject to be ſo now? and in my
" preſent weakneſs does it depend on me to be-
" lieve otherwiſe than I did when in full health
" and ſtrength of body and mind? It is our
" reaſon which determines our belief, but mine
" has loſt its beſt faculties; what dependance
" then could be made on the opinions I ſhould
" now adopt without it? what now remains for
" me to do, is to appeal to what I believed
" before; for the uprightneſs of my intention is
" the ſame, though I have loſt my judgement.
" If I am in an errour, I am ſorry for and
" deteſt it; and this is ſufficient to ſet my heart
" at eaſe as to my belief.

" With reſpect to my preparation for death;
" that, Sir, is made; badly indeed I own, but

" it is done in the beſt manner I could: and
" at leaſt much better than I can do it now.
" I endeavoured to diſcharge that important
" part of my duty before I became incapable
" of it. I prayed in health—when I was
" ſtrong, I ſtruggled with divine grace for fa-
" vour; at preſent, now I am weak, I am
" reſigned, and rely upon it. The beſt prayers
" of the ſick are patience and reſignation.
" The preparation of death is a good life; I
" know of no other. While I converſed with
" you, while I meditated by myſelf, while I
" endeavoured to diſcharge the duties which
" Providence ordained for me; it was then I
" was preparing myſelf for death: for meeting
" my God and judge at my laſt hour. It was
" then I adored him with all my faculties and
" powers: what more can I now do, when I
" have loſt them? Is my languid ſoul in a
" condition to raiſe itſelf to the Almighty?
" This remnant of a half-extinguiſhed life, ab-
" ſorbed in pain, is it worthy of being offered
" up to God? No, Sir, he leaves it me to em-
" ploy it for thoſe he taught me to love, and
" from whom it is his ſovereign will that I
" ſhould now depart: I am going to leave
" them to go to him; it is, therefore, with them
" I ſhould now concern myſelf; I ſhall ſoon
" have nothing to do but with him alone: the
" laſt pleaſure I take on earth ſhall be in doing
" my laſt duty; is not that to ſerve him
" and do his will; to diſcharge all thoſe du-
" ties

"ties which humanity enjoins me before I "throw it off entirely? What have I to do to "calm troubles which I have not? My con- "ſcience is not troubled; if ſometimes it has "accuſed me, it has done it more when I was "in health than at preſent. It tells me now that "God is more merciful than I am criminal, "and my confidence increaſes as I find I "approach nearer to him. I do not preſent him "with an imperfect, tardy, or forced repentance, "which, dictated by fear, can never be truely "ſincere, and is only a ſnare by which the "falſe penitent is deceived. I do not preſent "him with the ſervice of the remnant and latter "end of my days, full of pain and ſorrow, a "prey to ſickneſs, grief, anxiety, death; and "which I would not dedicate to his ſervice till "I could do nothing elſe. No, I preſent before "him my whole life, full indeed of errours "and faults, but exempt from the remorſe of "the impious, and the crimes of the wicked.

"To what puniſhment can a juſt God con- "demn me? The reprobate, it is ſaid, hate him. "Muſt he not firſt make me not love him? No, "I fear not to be found one of that number. "O thou great eternal Being! Supreme In- "telligence! ſource of life and happineſs! "Creator! Preſerver! Father! Lord of Na- "ture! God powerful and good, of whoſe "exiſtence I never doubted for a moment, and "under whoſe eye I have always delighted to "live! I know, I rejoice that I am going to

" appear before thy throne. In a few days my " ſoul, delivered from its earthly tabernacle, " ſhall begin to pay thee more worthily that " homage which will conſtitute my happineſs to " all eternity. I look upon what I ſhall be, " till that moment comes, as nothing. My " body, indeed, ſtill lives; but my intellectual " life is at an end. I am at the end of my " career, and am already judged from what is " paſt. To ſuffer, to die, is all that I have " now to do, and this is nature's work. I have " endeavoured to live in ſuch a manner as to " have no occaſion to concern myſelf at death; " and now it approaches, I ſee it without fear. " Thoſe who ſleep in the boſom of a father are " in no fear of being awaked."

This diſcourſe, begun in a grave and ſlow voice, and ending in a more elevated and animated tone, made on every one preſent, myſelf not excepted, an impreſſion the more lively, as the eyes of her who pronounced it ſeemed to ſparkle with a ſupernatural fire; rays of light ſeemed to encircle her brow; and, if there be any thing in this world which deſerves the name of celeſtial, it was certainly the face of Eloiſa, while ſhe was thus ſpeaking.

The miniſter himſelf was tranſported at what he heard; and, lifting up his hands and eyes to heaven, " Good God! (ſaid he) behold the worſhip that truely honours thee! deign to render it propitious; for how ſeldom do mortals offer thee the like! Madam (continued he, turning

to

to Eloiſa, and approaching her bed) I thought to have inſtructed you, but have myſelf been inſtructed. I have nothing further to ſay. You have that true faith, which knows how to love God. Bear with you that precious repoſe and teſtimony of a good conſcience, and believe me it will not deceive you. I have ſeen many Chriſtians in your ſituation, but never before ſaw any thing like this. What a difference between ſuch a peaceful end, and that of thoſe terrified ſinners, who implore Heaven with vain and idle prayers, unworthy to be heard. Your death, madam, is as exemplary as your life: you have lived to exerciſe your charity to mankind, and die a martyr to maternal tenderneſs. Whether it pleaſe God to reſtore you to us, to ſerve us as an example, or whether he is pleaſed to call you to himſelf, to crown your virtue with its due reward, may we all, ſo long as we ſurvive, live like you, and in the end follow your example in death; we ſhall then be certain of happineſs in another life."

He offered now to take his leave; but Eloiſa prevailed on him to ſtay. 'You are one of my friends (ſaid ſhe to him) and one of thoſe I take the greateſt pleaſure to ſee; it is for thoſe my laſt moments are ſo precious. We are going to part for too long a time to part ſo ſoon now." He was well pleaſed to ſtay, and I went out and left them.

At my return, I found the converſation continued ſtill on the ſame ſubject; but in a leſs

intereſting manner. The miniſter complained much of that falſe notion, which makes religion only of uſe to perſons on their death-bed, and repreſents its miniſters as men of ill omen. "We are looked upon (ſays he) in common, rather as the meſſengers of ſorrow and death, than of the glad tidings of life and ſalvation; and that, becauſe, from the convenient opinion of the world, that a quarter of an hour's repentance is ſufficient to efface fifty years of guilt, we are only welcome at ſuch a time. We muſt be clothed in a mourning habit, and affect a moroſe air; in ſhort, nothing is ſpared to render us diſmal and terrifying. It is yet worſe in other religious profeſſions. A dying Roman Catholick is ſurrounded by objects the moſt terrifying, and is peſtered with ceremonies that in a manner bury him alive. By the pains they take to keep the devils from him, he imagines he ſees his chamber full of them; he dies a hundred times with fear before he expires, and it is in this ſtate of horrour the church delights to plunge the dying ſinner, in order to make the greater advantage of his purſe."

"Thank God (ſaid Eloiſa) that we were not brought up in thoſe venal religions, which murther people to inherit their wealth, and who, ſelling heaven to the rich, would extend even to the other world that unjuſt inequality which prevails in this. I do not at all doubt that ſuch mournful ideas encourage infidelity, and create a natural averſion for that ſpecies of worſhip which

which adopts them. I hope (continued ſhe, looking ſtedfaſtly at me) that he who may educate our children will adopt very different maxims: and that he will not repreſent religion to them as a mournful exerciſe, by continually ſetting before them the proſpect of death. If they learn once but to live well, they will of themſelves know how to die."

In the continuation of this diſcourſe, which became leſs affecting and more interrupted than I ſhall tell you, I fully comprehended the maxims of Eloiſa, and the conduct at which I had been ſurpriſed. It appeared that, perceiving her ſituation quite deſperate, ſhe contrived only to remove that uſeleſs and mournful appearance which the fear of moſt perſons when dying makes them put on. This ſhe did either to divert our affliction, or to baniſh from her own view a ſpectacle ſo moving, and at the ſame time unneceſſary. "Death (ſaid ſhe) is of itſelf ſufficiently painful! why muſt it be rendered hideous? The care which others throw away in endeavouring to prolong their lives, I will employ to enjoy mine to the laſt moment. Shall I make an hoſpital of my apartment, a ſcene of diſguſt and trouble, when my laſt care will be to aſſemble in it all thoſe who are moſt dear to me? If I ſuffer the air to ſtagnate, I muſt baniſh my children or expoſe their health to danger. If I put on a frightful dreſs and appearance myſelf, I ſhall be known no longer; I ſhall be no longer the ſame perſon; you will all remember to

have loved me, and will be able to bear me no more. I ſhall, even alive, have the frightful ſpectacle of horrour before me, which I ſhall be, to my friends when I am dead. Inſtead of this, I have diſcovered the art to extend my life without prolonging it. I exiſt, I love, am loved, and live till the laſt breath forſakes me. The moment of death is nothing: the natural evil is a trifle; and I have overcome all thoſe of opinion."

This and a good deal of ſimilar diſcourſe paſſed between the patient, the miniſter, ſometimes the doctor, Fanny, and me. Mrs. Orbe was preſent all the while, but never joined in the converſation. Attentive to the wants of her friend, ſhe was very aſſiduous to ſerve her, when ſhe wanted any aſſiſtance; the reſt of the time ſhe remained immoveable and almoſt inanimate: ſhe kept looking at her without ſpeaking, and without underſtanding any thing of what was ſaid.

As to myſelf; fearing that Eloiſa would talk too much for her ſtrength, I took the opportunity of the miniſter and phyſician's talking to each other aſide, to tell her, in her ear, that ſhe talked a great deal for a ſick perſon, and reaſoned very profoundly for one who conceived herſelf incapable of reaſoning. "Yes (replied ſhe, very low) I talk too much for a perſon that is ſick, but not for one that is dying; I ſhall very ſoon have nothing more to ſay. With reſpect to argument, I reaſon no more now; I have done with

with it. I have often reflected on my laſt illneſs; I am now to profit by my reflexion. I am no longer capable of reflecting nor reſolving; I am now only able to talk of what I have before thought of, and to practiſe what I have formerly reſolved."

The remainder of the day paſſed away in nearly the ſame tranquillity, and almoſt in the ſame manner as if no ſick perſon was in the houſe. Eloiſa, juſt as in full health, calm and reſigned, talked with the ſame good ſenſe and the ſame ſpirit; putting on, now and then, an air of ſerenity approaching even to ſprightlineſs. In ſhort, I continued to obſerve a certain appearance of joy in her eyes, which increaſed my uneaſineſs, and concerning which I was determined to come to an explanation.

I delayed it no longer than the ſame evening: when, ſeeing I had an inclination to be left alone with her, ſhe told me I had prevented her, for that ſhe had ſomething to ſay to me. "It is very well (replied I) but as I intimated my intention firſt, give me leave firſt to explain myſelf."

Then ſitting down by her, and looking at her attentively, "My Eloiſa (ſaid I) my dear Eloiſa, you have wounded my very ſoul. Yes (continued I, ſeeing her look upon me with ſome ſurpriſe) I have penetrated your ſentiments; you are glad to die, you rejoice to leave me. Reflect on my behaviour to you ſince we have lived together; have I deſerved on your part ſo

cruel a deſire?" At that inſtant ſhe claſped both my hands in her's, and with a voice that thrilled my ſoul, "Who? I! (ſaid ſhe, I glad to leave you! Is it thus you penetrate my ſentiments? Have you ſo ſoon forgot our converſation of yeſterday?"—"At leaſt (interrupted I) you die content—I have ſeen—I ſee it."—"Hold (ſaid ſhe) it is indeed true, I die content; but it is content to die, as I have lived, worthy the name of your wife. Aſk of me no more, for I can tell you no more: but here (continued ſhe, taking a folded paper from under her pillow) here is what will unfold to you the myſtery." This paper was a letter which I ſaw was directed to you. "I give it to you open (added ſhe, giving it into my hands) that after having read it you may determine within yourſelf, either to ſend or ſuppreſs it, according as you think beſt. I deſire, however, you will not read it till I am no more; and I am certain you will grant that requeſt."

This letter, my dear St. Preux, you will find encloſed. She who wrote it I well know is dead; but I can hardly bring myſelf to believe that ſhe no longer exiſts.

She queſtioned me afterwards, expreſſing great uneaſineſs about her father. "Is it poſſible (ſaid ſhe) that he ſhould know his daughter to be in danger and ſhe not hear from him! Has any misfortune happened to him? Or has he ceaſed to love me? Can it be that my father, ſo tender a father, ſhould thus abandon his child? that

that he ſhould let me die without ſeeing him; without receiving his laſt bleſſing; without embracing him in my laſt moments. Good God! how bitterly will he reproach himſelf, when he comes to find that he will ſee me no more!"—This reflexion ſo extremely afflicted her, that I judged ſhe would be leſs affected to know her father was ill than to ſuſpect his indifference. I, therefore, determined to acquaint her with the truth, and in fact found her more eaſy than under her firſt ſuſpicions. The thoughts of never ſeeing him again, however, much affected her. "Alas! (ſaid ſhe) what will become of him when I am gone? Shall he live to ſurvive his whole family! What a life of ſolitude will his be? It is impoſſible he ſhould long ſurvive!" At this moment Nature reſumed its empire, and the horrours of approaching death were extremely perceptible. She ſighed, claſped her hands, lifted up her eyes to heaven; and, I ſaw plainly, endeavoured to pray, with all that difficulty which ſhe before obſerved always attended the prayers of the ſick.

When it was over, ſhe turned to me, and, complaining that ſhe felt herſelf very weak, told me ſhe foreſaw this would be the laſt time we ſhould have an opportunity of converſing together. "I conjure you, therefore (continued ſhe) by our ſacred union, in the name of thoſe dear infants, the pledges of our love, harbour no longer ſuch unjuſt ſuſpicions of your wife. Can I rejoice to leave you? You, the buſineſs of

whoſe life it has been to inſtruct and make me happy! you, who of all the men in the world, were the moſt capable to make me ſo; you, with whom only perhaps I could have lived within the bounds of diſcretion and virtue! No! believe me, if I could ſet any value upon life, it would be that I might ſpend it with you." Theſe words, pronounced with great tenderneſs, affected me to that degree, that as I preſſed her hands frequently with my lips, I found them wet with my tears. I never before thought my eyes made for weeping. Theſe tears were the firſt I ever ſhed ſince my birth, and ſhall be the laſt till the hour of my death. After having wept the laſt for Eloiſa, there is nothing left on earth that can draw from me a tear.

This was a day of great fatigue for poor Eloiſa. Her preparation of Mrs. Orbe in the preceding night, her interview with the children in the morning, that with the miniſter in the afternoon, together with the above converſation with me in the evening, had quite exhauſted her. She betook herſelf to reſt, and ſlept better that night than on the preceding, whether on account of her laſſitude, or that in fact her fever and paroxyſms were leſs violent.

Early the next morning, word was brought me that a ſtranger, very indifferently dreſſed, deſired very earneſtly to ſpeak particularly to Eloiſa: and though he was informed of her ſituation, he ſtill continued his importunity, ſaying his buſineſs related to an act of great

charity,

charity, that he knew Mrs. Wolmar very well, and that while ſhe had life remaining, ſhe would take pleaſure in exerting her benevolence. As Eloiſa had eſtabliſhed it as an inviolable rule that no perſon, particularly ſuch as appeared to be in diſtreſs, ſhould be turned away, the ſervants brought me word of the man and his requeſt: on which I ordered him in. His appearance was mean to the greateſt degree, being clothed almoſt in rags, and having in his air and manner all the ſymptoms of indigence. I did not obſerve, however, any thing further either in his look or diſcourſe to make me ſuſpicious of him; though he ſtill perſiſted in his reſolution of telling his buſineſs to none but Eloiſa. I told him, that if it related to any remedy he might be poſſeſſed of to ſave her life, I would give him all the recompenſe he might expect from her, without troubling her in her preſent extremity. "No, Sir (replied he) poor as I am, I deſire not your money. I demand only what belongs to me, what I eſteem beyond all the treaſures on earth, what I have loſt by my own folly, and what Mrs. Wolmar alone, to whom I owe it, can a ſecond time reſtore."

This diſcourſe, though unintelligible, determined me, however, what to do. A deſigning knave might indeed have ſaid as much, but he could never have ſaid it in the ſame manner. He required that none of the ſervants ſhould be preſent, a precaution which ſeemed myſterious and ſtrange? I indulged him, and introduced

him

him to Eloiſa. He had ſaid that he was known to Mrs. Orbe; he paſſed by her, however, without her taking notice of him, at which I was a little ſurpriſed. Eloiſa recollected him immediately. Their meeting was extremely affecting. Clara, hearing a noiſe, came forward, and ſoon remembered her old acquaintance, not without ſome tokens of joy, but theſe were ſoon checked by her affliction. One ſentiment only engroſſed her attention, and her heart was inſenſible to every thing elſe.

It is needleſs, I imagine, to tell you who this perſon was; a thouſand ideas will ariſe up in your memory, and ſuggeſt it. But whilſt Eloiſa was comforting him, however, ſhe was ſeiſed with a violent ſtoppage of her breath, and became ſo ill that we thought ſhe was going to expire. To prevent any further ſurpriſe or diſtraction, at a time when her relief only was to be thought on, I put the man into the cloſet, and bid him lock himſelf in. Fanny was then called up, and after ſome time Eloiſa recovered from her fit; when looking round, and ſeeing us all in a conſternation about her, ſhe ſaid, "Never mind, children, this is only an eſſay; it is nothing like ſo painful as one would think."

All was ſoon tranquil again; but the alarm was ſo great, that I quite forgot the man in the cloſet, till Eloiſa whiſpered me, to know what was become of him. This was not, however, till dinner was ſerved up, and we were all ſat down to table. I would have gone into the cloſet

cloſet to ſpeak to him, but he had locked the door on the inſide, as I had directed him; I was obliged, therefore, to have patience till after dinner.

During our repaſt, Du Boſſon, who dined with us, ſpeaking of a young widow who was going to marry again, made ſome reflexions on the misfortunes of widows in general; to which I replied, the fortune of thoſe was ſtill harder who were widows while their huſbands were living. "That, indeed, Sir (anſwered Fanny, who ſaw this diſcourſe was directed to her) is too true, eſpecially if ſuch huſbands are beloved." The converſation then turned upon her's; and, as ſhe always ſpoke of him very affectionately, it was natural for her to do ſo now, at a time when the loſs of a benefactreſs threatened to make that of her huſband ſtill more ſevere. This, indeed, ſhe did in the moſt affecting terms, commending the natural goodneſs of his diſpoſition, lamenting the bad examples by which he had been ſeduced, and ſo ſincerely regretting his loſs, that, being ſufficiently diſpoſed before to ſorrow, ſhe burſt out into a flood of tears. At this inſtant the cloſet-door flew open, and the poor man, ruſhing out, threw himſelf at her feet, embraced her knees, and mingled his tears with her's. She was holding a glaſs in her hand, which immediately fell to the ground; while the poor creature was ſo affected with joy and ſurpriſe, that ſhe had fallen into a fit, had not proper care been inſtantly taken to prevent it.

What

What followed is eaſily imagined. It was known in a moment over the whole houſe that Claude Anet was come, the huſband of our good Fanny! What a feſtival! He was hardly got out of the chamber before he was ſtripped of his tatters, and dreſſed in a decent manner. Had each of the ſervants had but two ſhirts a piece, Annet would ſoon have had as many as them all. They had, indeed, ſo far prevented me, that when I went out, with a deſign to get him equipped, I was obliged to make uſe of my authority, to make them take back the clothes they had furniſhed him with.

In the mean time Fanny would not leave her miſtreſs: in order, however, to give her an opportunity of an hour or two's converſation with her huſband, we pretended the children wanted to take an airing, and ſent them both to take care of them.

This ſcene did not diſturb Eloiſa ſo much as the preceding ones. There was nothing in it diſagreeable, and it rather did her good than harm. Clara and I paſſed the afternoon with her by ourſelves, and had two hours of calm uninterrupted converſation, which ſhe rendered the moſt agreeable and intereſting of any we had ever experienced in our lives.

She opened it with ſome obſervations on the affecting ſcene we had juſt beheld, and which recalled ſtrongly to her mind the times of her early youth. Then following the order of events, ſhe made a ſhort recapitulation of the incidents

incidents of her life, with a view to ſhow that, taking it for all in all, ſhe had been fortunate and happy; that ſhe had riſen gradually to the higheſt pinnacle of earthly happineſs, and that the accident which now cut her off in the middle of her days, ſeemed in all appearance, according to the natural courſe of things, to mark the point of ſeparation between the good and evil of mortal life.

She expreſſed her gratitude to heaven, in that it had been pleaſed to give her a ſuſceptible and benevolent heart, a ſound underſtanding, and an agreeable perſon; in that it had been pleaſed to give her birth in a land of liberty, and not in a country of ſlaves; that ſhe came of an honourable family, and not of an ignoble or criminal race; that ſhe was born to a moderate fortune, and not either to the ſuperfluous riches of the great, which corrupt the mind, or to the indigence of the poor, which debaſes it. She felicitated herſelf that ſhe was born of parents, both of them good and virtuous, replete with juſtice and honour, and who, tempering the faults of each other, had formed her judgement on their's, without ſubjecting her to their foibles or prejudices. She boaſted the advantages ſhe had enjoyed, of being educated in a rational and holy religion; which, ſo far from debaſing, elevates and ennobles mankind, which, neither favouring impiety nor fanaticiſm, permits its profeſſors to make uſe, at the ſame time, both

of

of faith and reaſon, to be at once both devout and humane.

Then preſſing the hand of Clara, which ſhe conſtantly held in her's, and looking at her with the moſt affecting tenderneſs, "All theſe bleſſings (ſaid ſhe) I have enjoyed in common with others; but this one—this, heaven reſerved for me alone; I am a woman, and yet have known a true friend. Heaven gave us birth at the ſame time; it gave us a ſimilarity of inclinations which has ſubſiſted to this hour: it formed our hearts one for the other; it united us in the cradle; I have been bleſſed with her friendſhip during my life, and her kind hand will cloſe my eyes in death. Find another example like this in the world, and I have no longer any thing to boaſt. What prudent advice hath ſhe not given me? from what perils hath ſhe not ſaved me? under what afflictions hath ſhe not comforted me? what ſhould I, indeed, have been without her? what ſhould I not have been, had I liſtened more attentively to her council?"

Clara, inſtead of replying, leaned her head on the breaſt of her friend, and would have ſtifled her ſighs by her tears: but it was impoſſible. Eloiſa embraced her with the moſt cordial affection, and for a long time a ſcene of tearleſs ſilence ſucceeded.

When they recovered themſelves, Eloiſa continued her diſcourſe. "Theſe bleſſings (ſaid ſhe) were mixed with their inconveniencies; ſuch is the lot of humanity! My heart was made for

for love; difficult as to perſonal merit, but indifferent to that of opinion, it was morally impoſſible that my father's prejudices ſhould ever agree with my inclinations. My heart required a lover of its own peculiar choice; ſuch a one offered himſelf; I made choice of him, or rather heaven ſo directed my choice, that, though a ſlave to paſſion, I ſhould not be abandoned to the horrours of my guilt, and that the love of virtue ſhould ſtill keep poſſeſſion of my heart, even after I was criminal. He made uſe of the ſpecious inſinuating language of virtue, by which a thouſand baſe men daily ſeduce our ſex; but perhaps he only of all mankind was ſincere. Did I then know his heart? Ah! no. I then knew no more of him than his profeſſions, and yet I was ſeduced. I did that through deſpair which others have done through wantonneſs: I even threw myſelf, as my father reproached me, into his arms; and yet he loved and reſpected me: by that reſpect alone I began to know him truely. Every man capable of ſuch behaviour muſt have a noble ſoul. Then I might ſafely have truſted him; but I had done that before, and afterwards ventured to truſt in my own ſtrength, and ſo was deceived."

She then went on to laviſh encomiums on the merits of this unhappy lover: I will not ſay ſhe did him more than juſtice, but the pleaſure ſhe took in it was very obvious. She even praiſed him at her own expenſe, and by endeavouring to be juſt to him, was unjuſt to herſelf. She

went

went even ſo far as to maintain that he held adultery in greater horrour than ſhe did; forgetting that he himſelf had diſproved any ſuch ſuggeſtion.

All the other incidents of her life were related in the ſame ſpirit. The behaviour of Lord B——, her huſband, her children, your return, our friendſhip, every thing was ſet in the moſt favourable light. She recapitulated even her misfortunes with pleaſure, as accidents which had prevented greater misfortunes. She loſt her mother at a time when that loſs was peculiarly felt; but if heaven had been pleaſed to ſpare her, a diſturbance, fatal to the peace of her family, might have been the conſequence. The aſſiſtance of her mother, feeble as it was, would have been ſufficient to ſtrengthen her reſolution to reſiſt the will of her father, whence family diſcord and ſcandal would have ariſen, perhaps ſome diſaſter or diſhonour, and perhaps ſtill worſe, if her brother had lived. She had married a man, againſt her own inclination, whom ſhe did not love; and yet ſhe maintained, that ſhe could not have been ſo happy with any other man, not even with the object of her paſſion. The death of Mr. Orbe had deprived her of a friend in the huſband, but had reſtored to her a more amiable one in the wife. She even went ſo far as to include her uneaſineſs, her pains, in the number of bleſſings, as they had ſerved to prevent her heart from being hardened againſt the ſufferings of others. "It is unknown (ſaid ſhe),

ſhe) the delight of bemoaning our own misfortunes or thoſe of others. A ſuſceptible mind finds a contentment in itſelf, independent of fortune. How deeply have I not ſighed! how bitterly have I not wept! and yet, were I to paſs my life again, the evil I have committed would be all that I would wiſh retrenched; that which I have ſuffered would be again agreeable." Theſe, St. Preux, were her own words; when you have read her letter they will perhaps ſeem more intelligible.

"Thus (continued ſhe) you ſee to what felicity I was arrived. I enjoyed a conſiderable ſhare of happineſs, and had ſtill more in view. The increaſing proſperity of my family, the virtuous education of my children, all that I held dear in the world aſſembled, or ready to be aſſembled around me. The time preſent and the future equally flattering; enjoyment and hope united to complete my happineſs. Thus raiſed to the pinnacle of earthly bliſs, I could not but deſcend; as it came before it was expected, it would have taken its flight while I was delighted in the thoughts of its duration. What could Providence have done to have ſuſtained me on the ſummit of felicity? A permanent ſituation is not the lot of mankind; no, when we have acquired every thing, we muſt loſe ſomething, though it were from no other cauſe than that the pleaſure of enjoyment diminiſhes by poſſeſſion. My father is already in the decline of life, my children of an age when life is very uncertain:

how many loſſes might not hereafter afflict me, without my having it in my power to repair or conſole myſelf under one! A mother's affection conſtantly increaſes, whilſt the tenderneſs of her offspring diminiſhes in proportion as they are abſent, or reſide at a diſtance from her. Mine, as they grew up, would be taken from me: they would live in the great world, and might neglect me. You intend to ſend one of them to Ruſſia; how many tears would not his departure and abſence coſt me! all by degrees would be detached from me, and I ſhould have nothing to ſupply their loſs. How often ſhould I find myſelf not in the ſituation in which I now am going to leave you! and, after all, I muſt ſtill die. Die perhaps the laſt of you all, alone and forſaken! the longer one lives, the more deſirous we are of living, even when our enjoyments are at an end: hence I might ſurvive till life became a burthen, and yet ſhould fear to die; it is the ordinary conſequence of old age. Inſtead of that, my laſt moments are now agreeable, and I have ſtrength to reſign myſelf to death, if death it may be called to leave behind us what we love. No, my friends, my children, think not that I ſhall leave you; I will remain with you: in leaving you thus united, my heart, my ſoul, will ſtill reſide among you; you will ſee me continually among you; you will perceive me perpetually near you——the time will alſo come when we ſhall be united again; nor ſhall the virtuous Wolmar himſelf eſcape me. My re-

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turn to God ſpeaks peace to my ſoul, and ſweetens the bitter moment that approaches: it promiſes me for you alſo the ſame felicity. I have been happy, I am ſtill happy, and am going to be ſo for ever; my happineſs is determined, beyond the power of fortune, to all eternity."

Juſt then the miniſter entered. Eloiſa was truely the object of his reſpect and eſteem; nobody knowing better than he the livelineſs and ſincerity of her belief. He was but too much affected with the converſation he had held with her the day before, and above all with the ſerenity and fortitude he had obſerved in her. He had often ſeen perſons die with oſtentation, but never with ſuch calmneſs. Perhaps alſo to the intereſt he took in her ſituation was added a little curioſity, to ſee whether ſuch her uncommon ſerenity would laſt to the end. Eloiſa had no occaſion to change the ſubject of diſcourſe to render it more agreeable to the character of our viſitor. As her converſation when in health was never on frivolous topicks, ſo now ſhe continued, on her ſick-bed, to talk over, with the ſame tranquillity, ſuch ſubjects as ſhe thought moſt intereſting to herſelf and her friends; ſpeaking indifferently on matters by no means indifferent in themſelves.

Thus, following the chain of her ideas relative to her notions of remaining with her friends; the diſcourſe turned on the ſituation of the ſoul ſeparated from the body; when ſhe took occa-

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ſion to admire the ſimplicity of ſuch perſons, who promiſed on their death-beds to come back to their friends, and bring them news of the other world. "This (continued ſhe) is juſt as reaſonable as the ſtories of ghoſts and apparitions, that are ſaid to commit a thouſand diſorders, and torment credulous good women; as if departed ſpirits had lungs to ſcold, and hands to fight with*. How is it poſſible for a pure ſpirit to act upon a ſoul encloſed in a body, and which by virtue of its union with ſuch body can perceive nothing but by means of the coporeal organs? this is not to be conceived. I muſt confeſs, however, I ſee nothing abſurd in ſuppoſing that the ſoul, when delivered from the body, ſhould return, wander about, or perhaps reſide near the perſons of ſuch as were dear to it in life: not indeed to inform them of its exiſtence; it has no means of communicating ſuch information; neither can it act on us, or perceive what we act, for want of the organs of

* Plato ſays that the ſouls of the juſt, who have contracted no uncleanneſs on earth, diſengage themſelves by death of all matter, and recover their original purity. But as to the ſouls of thoſe who had indulged themſelves in filthy and vicious paſſions, they do not ſoon recover that purity, but drag along with them certain terreſtrial particles, that confine them, as it were, to hover about the receptacles of their bodies. "Hence (ſays he) are ſeen thoſe apparitions, which ſometimes haunt burial places, &c. in expectation of new tranſmigrations."—— It is a madneſs common to philoſophers in all ages to deny the exiſtence of what is real, and to puzzle their *brains to explain* what is only imaginary.

of ſenſe neceſſary to that end; but methinks it might become acquainted with our thoughts and perceptions, by an immediate communication, ſimilar to that by which the Deity is privy to all our thoughts, and by which we reciprocally read the thoughts of each other, in coming face to face*: for (added ſhe, turning to the miniſter) of what uſe can the ſenſes be when there is nothing for them to do? The Supreme Being is neither ſeen nor underſtood; he only makes himſelf felt; he ſpeaks neither to the eyes nor the ears, but only to the heart."

I underſtood, by the anſwer of the paſtor, and from ſome ſigns which paſſed between them, that the reſurrection of the body had been one of the points on which they had formerly diſputed. I perceived alſo that I now began to give more attention to the articles of Eloiſa's religion, where her faith ſeemed to approach the bounds of reaſon.

She ſeemed to take ſo much pleaſure in theſe notions, that, had ſhe not been predetermined to abide by her former opinions, it had been cruelty to endeavour to invalidate one that ſeemed ſo agreeable to her in her preſent condition. "What an additional pleaſure (ſaid ſhe) have I not an hundred times taken, in doing a good action, in the imagination that my good mother was preſent, and that ſhe knew the heart,

* This ſeems to me to be well expreſſed; for what can it be to meet the Deity face to face, but to be able to read the Supreme Intelligence.

and approved the intentions of her daughter! There is ſomething ſo comfortable in the thoughts of living under the eyes of thoſe who were dear to us, that with reſpect to ourſelves they can hardly be ſaid to be deceaſed." You may judge whether Clara's hand was not frequently preſſed during this diſcourſe.

The miniſter had replied hitherto with a good deal of complacency and moderation; he took care, however, not to forget his profeſſion for a moment, but oppoſed her ſentiments on the buſineſs of another life. He told her the immenſity, glory, and other attributes of God would be the only objects which the ſouls of the bleſſed would be employed in contemplating: that ſuch ſublime contemplation would efface every other idea; that we ſhould ſee nothing, that we ſhould remember nothing, even in heaven; but that, after ſo raviſhing a proſpect, every thing earthly would be loſt in oblivion.

"That may well be (returned Eloiſa;) there is ſuch an immenſe diſtance between the lowneſs of our thoughts and the divine eſſence, that we cannot judge what effect it may have on us, when we are in a ſituation to contemplate its beauty. But, as I have hitherto been able to reaſon only from my ideas, I muſt confeſs that I leave ſome perſons ſo dear to me, that it would grieve me much to think I ſhould never remember them more. One part of my happineſs, ſay I, will conſiſt in the teſtimony of a good conſcience; I ſhall certainly remember then how I have

I have acted on earth: if I remember this, I cannot forget thoſe perſons who were dear to me; who muſt ſtill be ſo: to ſee* them no more then will be a pain to me, and pain enters not into the manſion of the bleſſed. But if, after all, I am miſtaken (ſays ſhe, ſmiling) a miſtake for a day or two will be ſoon at an end. I ſhall know, Sir, in a ſhort time, more on this ſubject than even yourſelf. In the mean time, this I am well aſſured of, that ſo long as I remember that I have lived on earth, ſo long ſhall I eſteem thoſe I loved there, among whom my worthy paſtor will not have the loweſt place."

In this manner paſſed the converſation all that day, during which Eloiſa appeared to have more eaſe, more hope and aſſurance than ever, ſeeming, in the opinion of the miniſter, to enjoy a foretaſte of that happineſs ſhe was going to partake among the bleſſed. Never did ſhe appear more tender, more amiable, in a word, more herſelf than at this time; always ſenſible, ſentimental, poſſeſſing the fortitude of the philoſopher and the mildneſs of a Chriſtian. Nothing of affectation, nothing aſſuming or ſententious eſcaped her; her expreſſion always dictated by her ſentiments with the greateſt ſimplicity of

* It is eaſy to underſtand, that by the word *ſee* is here meant purely an act of the intellect, ſuch as that whereby we are ſaid to ſee the Deity, and the Deity to ſee us. We cannot perceive the immediate communication of ſpirits: but we can conceive it very well; and better, in my opinion, than the communication of motion between bodies.

heart. If ſometimes ſhe ſtifled the complaints which her ſufferings might have drawn from her, it was not through affectation of a Stoical intrepidity: but to prevent thoſe who were about her from being afflicted; and when the pangs of approaching death triumphed over her ſtrength, ſhe ſtrove not to hide her ſufferings, but permitted us to comfort her; and when ſhe recovered from them a little, comforted us in her turn. In the intervals of her pain, ſhe was chearful, but her chearfulneſs was extremely affecting; a ſmile ſitting frequently on her lips, while the eye ran over with tears. To what purpoſe is that terrour which permits us not to enjoy what we are going ſpeedily to loſe? Eloiſa was even more pleaſing, more amiable than when in health; and the laſt day of her life was the moſt glorious of all.

Towards the evening ſhe had another fit, which, though not ſo ſevere as that in the morning, would not permit us to leave the children long with her. She remarked, however, that Harriet looked changed, and though we accounted for it, by ſaying ſhe wept much and eat little, ſhe ſaid, "No, her illneſs was in the blood."

Finding herſelf better, ſhe would have us ſup in her own chamber; the doctor being ſtill with her. Fanny alſo, whom we always uſed to ſend for when we choſe ſhe ſhould dine or ſup at our table, came up unſent for; which Eloiſa perceiving, ſhe ſmiled, and ſaid, "Yes, child,

child, come, you ſhall ſup with me to night; you may have your huſband longer than you will have your miſtreſs. (Then turning to me, ſhe ſaid) I ſhall have no need to recommend Claud Anet to your protection."—"No (replied I) whoſoever you have honoured with your benevolence needs no other recommendation to me."

Eloiſa, finding ſhe could bear the light, had the table brought near the bed, and what is hardly to be conceived of one in her ſituation, ſhe had an appetite. The phyſician, who ſaw no danger in gratifying her, offered her a bit of chicken; which ſhe refuſed, but deſired a bit of fiſh, which ſhe eat with a little bread, and ſaid it was very good. While ſhe was eating, you ſhould have ſeen the looks of Mrs. Orbe; you ſhould have ſeen, I ſay, for it is impoſſible to deſcribe them. What ſhe eat was ſo far from doing her harm, that ſhe ſeemed the better for it during the remainder of the repaſt. She was even in ſuch good humour, as to take upon her to complain that we had been ſo long without wine. "Bring (ſays ſhe) a bottle of Spaniſh wine for theſe gentlemen." By the looks of the phyſician ſhe ſaw he expected to taſte ſome genuine Spaniſh wine, and caſting her eyes at Clara, ſmiled at the conceit. In the mean time, Clara, without giving attention to that circumſtance, looked with extreme concern, ſometimes at Eloiſa, and then on Fanny, of whom her

eyes ſeemed to ſay, or aſk, ſomething which I could not underſtand.

The wine did not come ſo ſoon as was expected; the valet-de-chambre, who was entruſted with the key of the cellar, having taken it away through miſtake. On enquiry, indeed, it was found that the proviſion intended for one day had laſted five, and that the key was gone without any body's perceiving the want of it, notwithſtanding the family had ſat up ſeveral nights. The phyſician was amazed; and for my part, at a loſs whether I ſhould attribute this forgetfulneſs to the concern or the ſobriety of the ſervants, I was aſhamed to make uſe of ordinary precautions with ſuch domeſticks, and therefore ordered the door of the cellar to be broke open, and that for the future every one might drink at their diſcretion.

At length a bottle was brought us, and the wine proved excellent; when the patient, having a mind to taſte it, deſired ſome mixed with water; on which the doctor gave her a glaſs, and ordered her to drink it unmixed. Clara and Fanny now caſt their eyes more frequently at each other, but with looks timid and conſtrained, as if they were fearful of ſaying too much.

Her faſting, weakneſs, and ordinary way of living made the wine have a great effect on Eloiſa. She perceived it, and ſaid ſhe was intoxicated. "After having deferred it ſo long (ſaid ſhe) it was hardly worth while to begin to make

make me tipſy now, for a drunken woman is a moſt odious ſight." In fact, ſhe began to prattle, ſenſibly however as uſual, but with more vivacity than before. It was aſtoniſhing, nevertheleſs, that her colour was not heightened, her eyes ſparkled only with a fire moderated by the languor of her illneſs; and excepting her paleneſs ſhe looked to be in full health. Clara's emotion became now extremely viſible. She caſt a timid look alternately on Eloiſa, on me, on Fanny, and, above all, on the phyſician; theſe were all expreſſive of ſo many interrogatories which ſhe was deſirous but fearful to make. One would have thought every moment that ſhe was going to ſpeak, but that the fear of a diſagreeable reply prevented her; indeed her diſquietude appeared at length ſo great, that it ſeemed oppreſſive.

Fanny, encouraged by all theſe ſigns, and willing to relieve her, attempted to ſpeak, but with a trembling voice, faultered out that her miſtreſs ſeemed to have been in leſs pain to day ——that her laſt convulſion was not ſo ſtrong as the preceding——that the evening ſeemed —and there ſhe ſtopped. Clara, who trembled like a leaf while Fanny was ſpeaking, now fixed her eyes on the phyſician, liſtening with all her attention, and hardly venturing to breath, leſt ſhe ſhould not perfectly underſtand what he was going to ſay.

A man muſt have been ſtupid not to have gueſſed the meaning of all this. Du Boſſon

got up, felt the pulſe of the patient, and ſaid "Here is neither intoxication nor fever; the pulſe promiſes well." Clara roſe up in a moment, and, addreſſing the doctor with the utmoſt impatience, would have interrogated him more particularly, but her ſpeech failed her. "How, Sir! (ſaid ſhe)—the pulſe! the fever!" She could ſay no more; but her eyes ſparkled with impatience, and not a muſcle in her face but indicated the moſt diſquieting curioſity.

The doctor, however, made no anſwer, but took up the patient's hand again, examined her eyes and her tongue, and having ſtood ſilent a while, ſaid, "I underſtand you, madam; but it is impoſſible for me to ſay any thing poſitively at preſent, only this, that if the patient is in the ſame ſituation at this hour to-morrow morning I will anſwer for her life." The words had ſcarce dropped from his lips before Clara, ruſhing forward quick as lightening, overturned two chairs and almoſt the table to get at him, when ſhe hung round his neck, and kiſſed him a hundred times, ſobbing, and bathing his face with her tears. With the ſame impetuoſity ſhe took a ring of value from her finger, and put it forcibly on his, crying out, as well as ſhe could, quite out of breath, "O, Sir! if you do but reſtore her to us, it is not one life only you will be ſo happy as to ſave."

Eloiſa ſaw and heard this, which greatly affected her; looking on her friend, therefore, ſhe thus broke out, in a ſorrowful and moving tone:

tone: "Cruel Clara! how you make me regret the loſs of life! Are you reſolved to make me die in deſpair? muſt you be a ſecond time prepared?" Theſe few words were like a clap of thunder; they immediately extinguiſhed her tranſports, but could not quite ſtifle her rekindled hopes.

The doctor's reply to Mrs. Orbe was immediately known throughout the houſe, and the honeſt domeſticks already conceited their miſtreſs half reſtored. They unanimouſly reſolved, therefore, to make the doctor a preſent on her recovery, to which each contributed three months' wages, and the money was immediately put into the hands of Fanny; ſome borrowing of the others what they wanted to make up their quota of the ſum. This agreement was made with ſo much eagerneſs and haſte, that Eloiſa heard in her bed the noiſe of their acclamations. Think, my friend, what an effect this muſt have had on the heart of a woman, who felt herſelf dying. She made a ſign to me to come near, and whiſpered in my ear, "See how they make me drink to the very bottom that bitter yet ſweet cup of ſenſibility!"

When it was time to retire, Mrs. Orbe, who ſtill partook of her couſin's bed, called her woman, to ſit up that night to relieve Fanny: the latter however objected to that propoſal, and ſeemingly with greater earneſtneſs than ſhe would have done, had not her huſband been come. Mrs. Orbe perſiſted notwithſtanding in

her deſign, and both of them paſſed the night together in the cloſet. I ſat up in the next chamber, but the hopes which the domeſticks entertained had ſo animated their zeal, that neither perſuaſions nor threats could prevail on one of them to go to bed that night. Thus the whole houſe ſat up all night under ſo much impatience, that there was not one of the family who would not have gladly given a whole year of his life to have had it nine o'clock in the morning.

I frequently heard them walking in her chamber during the night, which did not diſturb me; but toward the morning, when things ſeemed more quiet and ſtill, I was alarmed at a low, indiſtinct noiſe that ſeemed to come from Eloiſa's room. I liſtened, and thought I could now diſtinguiſh the groans of a perſon in extremity. I ran into the room, threw open the curtain, and there——O St. Preux! there I ſaw them both, thoſe amiable friends, motionleſs, locked in each other's embrace, the one fainted away, and the other expiring. I cried out, and haſtened to prevent or receive her laſt ſigh: but it was too late! Eloiſa was no more!

I can give you no account of what paſſed for ſome hours afterwards, being ignorant of what befel myſelf during that time. As ſoon as I was a little recovered from my firſt ſurpriſe, I enquired after Mrs. Orbe; and learned that the ſervants were obliged to carry her into her own chamber, where at laſt they were forced to confine

confine her, to prevent her returning into that of Eloiſa; which ſhe had ſeveral times done, throwing herſelf on the body, embracing, chafing, and kiſſing it in a kind of phrenzy, and exclaiming aloud in a thouſand paſſionate expreſſions of a fruitleſs deſpair.

On entering her apartment, I found her abſolutely frantick, neither ſeeing nor minding any thing, knowing nobody, but running about the room, and wringing her hands, ſometimes muttering in a hollow voice ſome extravagant words, and at others ſending forth ſuch terrible ſhrieks as to make one ſhudder with horrour. On the feet of the bed ſat her woman, frightened out of her wits, not daring to breathe or ſtir, but ſeeking to hide herſelf, and trembling every limb. In fact the convulſions which at this time agitated the unhappy Clara had ſomething in them moſt terrifying. I made a ſign that her woman ſhould retire; fearing leſt a ſingle word of conſolation, untimely offered, might have put her into an actual fury.

I did not attempt, therefore, to ſpeak to her; as ſhe could neither have liſtened to, or underſtood me; but obſerving after ſome time that her ſtrength was quite exhauſted with fatigue, I placed her on a ſettee; then ſitting down by her, and holding her hands, I ordered the children to be brought in, and called them round her. Unhappily, the firſt ſhe took notice of was him that was the innocent cauſe of her friend's death. The ſight of him I could ſee made her

tremble; her countenance changed, ſhe turned away her looks from him in a kind of horrour, and ſtruggled to get her hands looſe, to puſh him from her. I called him then to me. "Unfortunate boy (ſaid I); for having been too dear to the one, you are become hateful to the other: it is plain their hearts were not in every thing alike." She was extremely angry at what I ſaid, and retorted it ſeverely; it had nevertheleſs its effect in the impreſſion it made on her. For ſhe immediately took the child up in her arms, and attempted to kiſs him, but could not, and ſet him down again immediately. She did not even look upon him with the ſame pleaſure as on the other, and I am very glad it is not this boy which is intended for her daughter.

Ye ſuſceptible minds! what would ye have done in this ſituation? Ye would have acted like Mrs. Orbe. After having taken care of the children, and of Clara, and given the neceſſary orders about the funeral, it was neceſſary for me to take my horſe, and be the ſorrowful meſſenger of the heavy tidings to an unhappy father. I found him ſtill in pain from his hurt, as well as greatly uneaſy and troubled about the accident which had befallen his daughter. I left him overwhelmed with ſorrow; with the ſorrow of the aged, which breaks not out into external appearances, which excites neither tranſport nor exclamations, but preys inwardly and fatally on the heart. That he will never overcome his grief I am certain, and I can plainly foreſee the laſt

laſt ſtroke that is wanting to complete the miſfortunes of his friend. The next day I made all poſſible haſte, in order to be at home early, and pay the laſt honours to the worthieſt of women: but all was not yet over. She muſt be made to revive, to afflict me with the loſs of her a ſecond time.

As I drew near my houſe, I ſaw one of my people come running out to meet me, who cried out from as far as he could be heard; "Sir, Sir, make haſte, make haſte, my miſtreſs is not dead!" I could not comprehend what he meant; but made all the haſte I could, and found the court-yard full of people, crying for joy, and calling out aloud for bleſſings on Mrs. Wolmar. I aſked the reaſon of all this? Every one was tranſported with joy, but nobody could give me a reaſonable anſwer; for as to my own people, their heads were abſolutely turned. I made the beſt of my way, therefore, to Eloiſa's apartment, where I found more than twenty perſons on their knees round the bed, with their eyes attentively fixed on the corpſe, which, to my great ſurpriſe, I ſaw dreſſed out, and lying on the bed: my heart fluttered, and I examined into her ſituation. But, alas! ſhe was dead and cold! This moment of falſe hope, ſo ſoon and ſo cruelly extinguiſhed was the moſt afflicting moment of my whole life. I am not apt to be cholerick, but I found myſelf on this occaſion extremely angry, and reſolved to come at the bottom of this extravagant ſcene. But all

was

was ſo diſguiſed, ſo altered, ſo changed, that I had the greateſt difficulty in the world to come at the truth. At length, however, I unravelled the myſtery, and thus it was:—My father-in-law, being alarmed at the accident he had heard, and thinking he could ſpare his valet-de-chambre, had ſent him before my arrival, to learn the ſituation of his daughter. This old ſervant being fatigued with riding on horſe-back, had taken a boat, and, croſſing the lake in the night, arrived at Clarens the very morning of the day in which I returned. On his arrival he ſaw the univerſal conſternation the houſe was in; and, learning the cauſe, went ſobbing up to Eloiſa's apartment; where, throwing himſelf on his knees by the bed-ſide, he wept and contemplated the features of his departed miſtreſs. Then giving vent to his ſorrows, he cried out, "Ah! my good miſtreſs! ah! why did it not pleaſe God to take me, inſtead of you! Me, that am old, that have no connexions, that can be of no more ſervice on the face of the earth! but to take you, in the flower of youth, the pride of your family, the bleſſing of your houſe, the hope of the unfortunate, alas! was I preſent at your birth, thus to behold you dead!"—

In the midſt of theſe and ſuch like exclamations, which flowed from the goodneſs and ſincerity of his heart, the weak old man, who kept his eyes ſtill fixed on the corpſe, imagined he ſaw it move: having once taken this into his head, he imagined further that Eloiſa turned her eyes,

eyes, looked at him, and made a ſign to him with her head. Upon this he roſe up in great tranſport, and ran up and down the houſe, crying out his miſtreſs was not dead, that ſhe knew him, and that he was ſure ſhe was living, and would recover. This was ſufficient to call every body together; the ſervants, the neighbours, and the poor, who before made the air reſound with their lamentations, now all as loudly cried out in tranſport, "She is not dead! ſhe lives! ſhe lives!" The noiſe ſpread and increaſed; the common people, all fond of the marvellous, readily propagated the news: every one eaſily believed what he wiſhed might be true, and ſought to give others pleaſure, by countenancing the general credulity. So that, in a ſhort time, the deceaſed was reported not only to have made a motion with her head, but to have walked about, to have converſed, &c. more than twenty witneſſes having had ocular proofs of circumſtances that never happened or exiſted. No ſooner were they poſſeſſed with the notion of her being alive, but a thouſand efforts were made to reſtore her; they preſſed in crouds about her bed, ſpoke to her, threw ſpirits in her face, felt for her pulſe, and did every thing their fooliſh apprehenſions ſuggeſted to recover her; till her women, juſtly offended at ſeeing the body of their miſtreſs ſurrounded by a number of men, got every body turned out of the room, and ſoon convinced themſelves how egregiouſly they had been deceived. Incapable, however,

however, of reſolving to put an end to ſo agreeable an errour, or perhaps ſtill hoping for ſome miraculous event, they clothed the body with care, and though her wardrobe was left to them, they did not ſpare the richeſt apparel. After which, laying her out on the bed, and leaving the curtains open, they returned to their tears amidſt the publick rejoicings of the multitude.

I arrived in the height of this phrenſy, but when I became acquainted with the cauſe, found it impoſſible to bring the crowd to reaſon; and that if I had ſhut up my doors, and had ordered the immediate burial of the corpſe, it might have occaſioned ſome diſturbance; or that I ſhould have paſſed, at leaſt, for a parricide of a huſband, who had buried his wife alive, and ſhould have been held in deteſtation by the whole country. I reſolved, therefore, to defer the funeral. After ſix-and-thirty hours, however, I found, by the extreme heat of the weather, the corpſe began to change, and, though the face preſerved its features and ſweetneſs, there ſeemed even there ſome ſigns of alteration. I mentioned it to Mrs. Orbe, who ſat in a continued ſtupor at the head of the bed. Not that ſhe was ſo happy as to be the dupe of ſo groſs a deluſion, but ſhe pretended to be ſo, that ſhe might continue in the chamber, and indulge her ſorrows.

She underſtood my deſign, and ſilently withdrew. In a moment after, however, ſhe returned, bringing in her hand that veil of gold

tiſſue

tiſſue embroidered with pearls, which you brought her from the Indies*: when, coming up to her bed, ſhe kiſſed the veil, and ſpreading it over the face of her deceaſed friend, ſhe cried out with a ſhrill voice, "Accurſed be that ſacrilegious hand which ſhall preſume to lift up this veil! accurſed be that impious eye which ſhall dare to look on this disfigured face!"

This action and imprecation had ſuch an effect on the ſpectators, that, as if by a ſudden inſpiration, it was repeated by one and all from every quarter. Such an impreſſion, indeed, did it make on our ſervants, and the people in general, that the deceaſed being put into the coffin dreſſed as ſhe was, and with the greateſt caution, was carried away, and buried in the ſame attire, without any perſon daring to touch the veil that covered her face†.

Thoſe are certainly the moſt unhappy who, beſide the ſupporting their own ſorrows, are under the neceſſity of conſoling others. Yet this is my taſk with my father-in-law, with Mrs. Orbe, with friends, with relations, with my

* It is clearly to be ſeen that the dream of St. Preux, of which Mrs. Orbe's imagination was conſtantly full, ſuggeſted the expedient of the veil. I conceive alſo that, if we examine into matters of this kind ſtrictly, we ſhall find the ſame relation between many predictions and their accompliſhment. Events are not always predicted becauſe they are to happen; but they happen becauſe they were predicted.

† The people of this country, though proteſtants, are extremely ſuperſtitious.

my neighbours, and with my own houſehold. I could yet ſupport it well enough with all but my old friend and Mrs. Orbe: but you muſt be a witneſs to the affliction of the latter to judge how much it adds to mine. So far from taking my endeavours to comfort her in good part, ſhe even reproaches me for them; my ſollicitude offends her, and the coldneſs of my affliction but aggravates her's; ſhe would have my grief be as bitter and extravagant as her's; her barbarous affliction would gladly ſee the whole world in deſpair. Every thing ſhe ſays, every thing ſhe does looks like madneſs; I am obliged therefore to put up with every thing, and am reſolved not to be offended. In ſerving her who was beloved by Eloiſa, I conceive I do a greater honour to her memory than by fruitleſs tears and lamentations.

You will be able to judge, from one inſtance, of the reſt of her behaviour. I thought I had gained my point, by engaging her to take care of herſelf, in order to be able to diſcharge thoſe duties which her dying friend had impoſed on her. Reduced very low by convulſions, abſtinence, and want of reſt, ſhe ſeemed at length reſolved to attempt her uſual method of living, and to come to table in the dining-room. The firſt time, however, I ordered the children to dine in the nurſery, being unwilling to run the hazard of this eſſay in their preſence; violent paſſions of every kind being one of the moſt dangerous objects that can be ſhown to children.

For

For the paſſions, when exceſſive, have always ſomething puerile and diverting to young minds, by which they are ſeduced to admire what they ought to dread.

On entering the dining-room, ſhe caſt her eyes on the table, and ſaw covers laid for two perſons only; at which ſhe flung herſelf into the firſt chair that ſtood next her, refuſing to come to table. I imagined I knew the reaſon, and ordered a third plate to be ſet on the table, at the place where her couſin uſed generally to ſit. She then permitted me to lead her to her ſeat without reluctance, placing herſelf with great caution, and diſpoſing her gown as if ſhe was afraid to incommode the empty chair. On putting the firſt ſpoonful of ſoup to her mouth, however, ſhe withdrew it, and aſked, with a peeviſh air, what buſineſs that plate had there, when no body made uſe of it? I anſwered, ſhe was in the right, and had it taken away: She then ſtrove to eat, but could get nothing down; by degrees her ſtomach ſwelled, her breath grew ſhort, and all at once ſhe ſtarted up, and returned to her own chamber, without ſaying a word, or hearing any thing that I ſaid to her, obſtinately refuſing every thing but tea all that day.

The next day I had the ſame taſk to begin again. I now conceived the beſt way to bring her to reaſon was to humour her, and to endeavour to ſoften her deſpair by more tender ſentiments. You know how much her daugh-

ter reſembles Mrs. Wolmar; that ſhe took a pleaſure in heightening that reſemblance, by dreſſing her in the ſame manner, having brought ſome clothes for her from Geneva, in which ſhe uſed to dreſs her like Eloiſa. I ordered Harriet, therefore, to be dreſſed as much in imitation of Eloiſa as poſſible, and, after having given her her leſſon, placed her at table where Eloiſa uſed to ſit; three covers being laid, as the day before.

Clara immediately comprehended my deſign, and was affected, giving me a tender and obliging look. This was the firſt time ſhe ſeemed ſenſible of my aſſiduity, and I promiſed myſelf ſucceſs from the expedient.

Harriet, proud to repreſent her little mama, played her part extremely well; ſo well, indeed, that I obſerved the ſervants in waiting ſhed tears. She nevertheleſs always gave the name of mama to her mother, and addreſſed her with proper reſpect. At length, encouraged by ſucceſs and my approbation, ſhe ventured to put her hand to the ſoup ſpoon, and cried, "*Clara, my dear, do you chooſe any of this!*" The geſture, tone, and manner in which ſhe ſpoke this were ſo exactly like thoſe of Eloiſa, that it made her mother tremble. A moment after, however, ſhe burſt into a fit of laughter, and offering her plate, replied; "Yes, child, give me a little, you are a charming creature." She then began to eat with an eagerneſs that ſurpriſed me. Looking at her with ſome attention, I ſaw ſomething

thing wild in her eyes, and a greater impatience in her action and manner than uſual. I prevented her therefore from eating any more, and it was well I did ſo; for an hour after ſhe was taken extremely ill with a violent ſurfeit, which, had ſhe continued to eat more, might have been fatal. From this time I reſolved to try no more projects of this kind, as they might affect her imagination too much. Sorrow is more eaſily cured than madneſs; I thought it better, therefore, to let her ſuffer under the one a little longer, than run the hazard of driving her into the other.

This is the ſituation, my friend, in which we are at preſent. Since the Baron's return, indeed, Clara goes up every morning to his apartment, whether I am at home or abroad; where they generally paſs an hour or two together. She begins, alſo, to take a little more notice of the children. One of them has been ſick; this accident has made her ſenſible that ſhe has ſtill ſomething to loſe, and has animated her zeal to the diſcharge of her duty. Yet, with all this, ſhe is not yet ſufficiently ſorrowful; her tears have not yet begun to flow; we wait for you to draw them forth, for you to dry them up again. You cannot but underſtand me. Think of the laſt advice of Eloiſa; it was indeed firſt ſuggeſted by me, and I now think it more than ever prudent and uſeful. Come and be reunited to all that remains of Eloiſa. Her father, her friend, her huſband, her children, all

expect

expect you, all desire your company, which cannot fail of being universally useful.

In a word, without further explanations, come, partake, and cure us of our sorrows; I shall perhaps be more obliged to you than to any other man in the world.

LETTER CLXII.

FROM ELOISA.

This letter was enclosed in the preceding.

OUR projects are at an end! Circumstances, my good friend, are changed: let us bear it without murmuring; it is the will of consummate wisdom. We pleased ourselves with the thoughts of being re-united; such a re-union was not good for us. The goodness of Providence has prevented it, without doubt to prevent our misery.

Long have I indulged myself in the salutary delusion, that my passion was extinguished; the delusion is now vanished, when it can be no longer useful. You imagined me cured of my love; I thought so too. Let us thank heaven that the deception hath lasted as long as it could be of service to us. In vain, alas! I endeavoured to stifle that passion which inspired me with life; it was impossible; it was interwoven with my heart-strings. It now expands itself, when it is no longer to be dreaded; it supports me now my strength fails me; it chears my

my ſoul even in death. O my friend! I can now make this confeſſion without fear or ſhame; this involuntary ſentiment has been of no prejudice to my virtue, it has never ſullied my innocence; I have done my duty in all things that were in my power. If my heart was your's, it was my puniſhment, and not my crime. My virtue is unblemiſhed, and my love has left behind it no remorſe.

I glory in my paſt life: but who could have anſwered for my future years? Perhaps, were I to live another day, I ſhould be culpable? what then might I not have been during whole years ſpent in your company? what dangers have I not run without knowing it? and to how much greater was I going to be expoſed? Every trial has indeed been made, but trials may be too often repeated. Have I not lived long enough to be happy and virtuous? In taking me hence heaven deprives me of nothing which I ought to regret. I go, my friend, at a moſt favourable moment: ſatisfied with you and myſelf, I depart in peace.

I foreſee, I feel your affliction: I know too well you will be left to mourn; the thoughts of your ſorrow cauſe my greateſt uneaſineſs: but reflect on the conſolation I leave with you. The obligations left you to diſcharge on the part of her who was ſo dear to you ought to make it your duty to take care of yourſelf for her ſake. You are left in charge with her better half. You will loſe no more of Eloiſa than you

have

have long been deprived of. Her better part remains with you. Come and join her family, in the midſt of whom Eloiſa's heart will ſtill be found. Let every one that was dear to her unite to give her a new being. Your buſineſs, your pleaſures, your friendſhip, ſhall be her own work. The bonds of your union ſhall give her new life, nor will ſhe totally expire but with the laſt of her friends.

Think there remains for you another Eloiſa, and forget not what you owe her. You are both going to loſe the half of yourſelves; unite therefore to preſerve the other. The only method that remains for you to ſurvive me, is to ſupply my place in my family and with my children. Oh! that I could but invent ſtill ſtronger bonds to unite thoſe who are ſo dear to me! but reflect how much you are indebted to each other, and let that reflexion ſtrengthen your mutual attachment. Your former objections againſt entering into ſuch an engagement will now become arguments for it. How can either of you ever ſpeak of me without melting into tenderneſs? No, Eloiſa and Clara ſhall for the future be ſo united together in your thoughts, that it ſhall not be in the power of your heart to ſeparate them. Her's will ſhare in every thing your's has felt for her friend; ſhe will become both the confident and object of your paſſion. You will be happy in the enjoyment of that Eloiſa who ſurvives, without being unfaithful to her you ſhall have loſt; and after ſo many diſappointments

ments and misfortunes, ſhall, before the age of life and love is paſt, burn with a lawful flame, and poſſeſs the happineſs of an innocent paſſion.

Secured by this chaſte union, you will be at liberty to employ your thoughts entirely on the diſcharge of thoſe duties which I have recommended; after which you need never be at a loſs to account for the good you have done on earth. You know there exiſts alſo a man worthy of an honour to which he durſt not aſpire: you know him to have been your deliverer, as well as the huſband of your friend. Left alone, without connexions in this life, without expectations from futurity, without joy, without comfort, without hope, he will ſoon be the moſt unfortunate of men. You owe to him the ſame pains he has taken with you, and you know the way to render them ſucceſsful. Remember the inſtructions of my former letter. Paſs your days with him. Let no one that loved me forſake him. As he reſtored your taſte for virtue, ſo ſhow him the object and the value of it. Be you truely a chriſtian, to engage him to be one too; the ſucceſs of the attempt is more probable than perhaps you imagine. He has done his duty; I will do mine; and you muſt hereafter do your's. God is juſt, and my confidence in him will not deceive me.

I have but a word or two more to ſay, concerning my children. I know the trouble their education will coſt you; but at the ſame time, I know you will not repine. In the moſt

fatiguing moments of ſuch employment, reflect that they are the children of Eloiſa, and every thing will be eaſy. Mr. Wolmar will put into your hands the remarks I have made on your eſſay, and on the character of my two ſons. They are, however, unfiniſhed, and I leave them to you, not as rules for your conduct, but ſubmit them as hints to your judgement. Strive not to make my children ſcholars, but benevolent and honeſt men. Speak to them ſometimes of their mother—you know how dear they were to her—tell Marcellin I die willingly, as I ſaved his life. Tell his brother it was for him I could have wiſhed to live. Tell their—but I find myſelf fatigued—I muſt put an end to this letter. In leaving my children with you, I part with you with leſs regret; for in them I ſtill continue with you.

Farewell, my dear friend! once more farewell. My life ends, alas! as it began. Perhaps I have ſaid too much, at a time when the heart diſguiſes nothing——ah! why ſhould I be afraid to expreſs all I feel? It is no longer I that ſpeak: I am already in the arms of death. Before you read this letter, the worms will be preying on the features of your friend, and will take poſſeſſion of a heart where your image will be found no more. But can my ſoul exiſt without you? Without you what happineſs can I enjoy? No, we will not part—I go but to expect you. That virtue, which ſeparated us on earth, will unite us for ever in the manſions of the bleſſed.

I die

I die in that peaceful hope; too happy to purchaſe at the expenſe of my life the privilege of loving you without a crime, and of telling you ſo once more.

LETTER CLXIII.

FROM MRS. ORBE.

I Am glad to hear that you begin to be ſo well recovered, as to give us hopes of ſeeing you ſoon here. You muſt, my friend, endeavour to get the better of your weakneſs; and try to paſs the mountains before the winter prevents you. The air of this country will agree with you; you will ſee here nothing but ſorrow; and perhaps our common affliction will be the means of ſoothing your's. Mine ſtands greatly in need of your aſſiſtance; for I can neither weep, nor ſpeak, nor make myſelf underſtood. Mr. Wolmar, indeed, underſtands me, but he makes me no anſwer. The affliction of an unfortunate father alſo is buried within himſelf; nor can any thing be conceived more cruelly tormenting: he neither hears, ſees, nor underſtands any thing. Age has no vent for its griefs. My children affect me, without knowing how to be affected themſelves. I am ſolitary in the midſt of company; a mournful ſilence prevails around me; and in the ſtupidity of my affliction, I ſpeak to nobody, having but juſt life enough in me to feel the horrours of death. O come, you who partake my loſs, come and partake of my griefs.

Come, cheriſh my heart with your ſorrow. This is the only conſolation I can hope for; the only pleaſure I can taſte.

But before you arrive, and inform me of your intentions relative to a project which I know has been mentioned to you, it is proper I ſhould inform you firſt of mine. I am frank and ingenuous, and therefore will diſſemble nothing. That I have loved you I confeſs, nay, perhaps I love you ſtill, and ſhall always do ſo: but this I know not, nor deſire to know. I am not ignorant that it is ſuſpected, which I do not concern myſelf about. But what I have to ſay, and what you ought to obſerve, is this: that a man who was beloved by Eloiſa, and could reſolve to marry another woman, would, in my opinion, be ſo baſe and unworthy a creature, that I ſhould think it a diſhonour to call ſuch a one my friend. And with reſpect to myſelf, I proteſt to you, that the man, whoever he be, who ſhall preſume to talk of love hereafter to me ſhall never have a ſecond opportunity as long as he lives.

Think then only on the employment that awaits you, on the duties impoſed on you, and on her to whom you engaged to diſcharge them. Her children are growing up apace, her father is inſenſibly waſting, her huſband is in continual agitation of mind: in vain he ſtrives to think her annihilated; his heart rebels againſt his reaſon. He ſpeaks of her, he ſpeaks to her, and ſighs. Methinks I ſee already the repeated

wiſhes

wiſhes of Eloiſa half accompliſhed, and that you may put a finiſhing hand to ſo great a work. What a motive is here to induce both you and Lord B——, to repair hither. It is becoming his noble mind that our misfortunes have not made him change his reſolution.

Come then, dear and reſpectable friends, come and rejoin all that is left of Eloiſa. Let us aſſemble all that was dear to her: let her ſpirit animate us; let her heart unite our's; let us live continually under her eye. I take a delight in conceiving that her amiable and ſuſceptible ſpirit will leave its peaceful manſions to reviſit our's; that it will take a pleaſure in ſeeing its friends imitate her virtues, in hearing herſelf honoured by their acknowledgements, in ſeeing them kiſs her tomb, and ſigh at the repetition of her name. No, ſhe has not yet forſaken thoſe haunts which ſhe uſed to make ſo delightful. They are ſtill full of her. I ſee her in every object, I perceive her at every ſtep; every hour of the day I hear her well-known voice. It was here ſhe lived, here died, and here repoſe her aſhes.—As I go, twice a week, to the church, I caſt my eye on the ſad, revered ſpot——O beauty! is ſuch thy laſt aſylum!——Sincerity! friendſhip! virtue! pleaſure! innocence! all lie buried in her grave—I feel myſelf drawn as it were involuntarily to her tomb——I ſhudder as I approach———I dread to violate the hallowed earth——I imagine that I feel it ſhake and tremble under my

feet——that I hear a plaintive voice call me from the hollow tomb——Clara*! where art thou? Clara! why doſt thou not come to thy friend?——Alas! her grave hath yet but half her aſhes——it is impatient for the remainder of its prey——yet a little while, and it ſhall be ſatisfied!

* After having read theſe letters ſeveral times over, I think I have diſcovered the reaſon why the intereſt which I imagine every well-diſpoſed reader will take in them, though perhaps not very great, is yet agreeable: and this is, becauſe, little as it may prove, it is not excited by villainies or crimes, nor mixed with the diſagreeable ſenſations of hatred. I cannot conceive what pleaſure it can give a writer, to imagine and deſcribe the character of a villain; to put himſelf in his ſituation as often as he repreſents his actions, or to ſet them in the moſt flattering point of view. For my part, I greatly pity the authours of many of our tragedies ſo full of wickedneſs and horrour, who ſpend their lives in making characters act and ſpeak, which one cannot ſee or hear without ſhuddering. It would be to me a terrible misfortune to be condemned to ſuch labour; nor can I think but that thoſe who do it for amuſement muſt be violently zealous for the amuſement of the publick. I admire their genius and talents; but I thank God, that he has not beſtowed ſuch talents upon me.

SEQUEL

OF

JULIA,

OR,

THE NEW ELOISA.

THE

AMOURS

OF

LORD EDWARD B*.

THE ſingular adventures of Lord Edward at Rome were too romantick to be joined with thoſe of Julia, without ſpoiling the ſimplicity of the latter. I ſhall here throw together ſuch a ſhort account of them as may be neceſſary to explain the two or three letters in which they are mentioned.

Lord Edward, during his excurſions in Italy, had become acquainted with a Neapolitan woman of quality, of whom he ſoon grew enamoured in a high degree; and ſhe on her ſide conceived a paſſion for him, to which ſhe was a prey during the ſhort remainder of a life

 abridged

* This piece, now publiſhed for the firſt time, is copied from the original and only manuſcript in the authour's hand-writing, belonging to, and in the poſſeſſion of, the *Ducheſſe de Luxembourg*, who favoured the editor with the uſe of it.

abridged by its violence. The rough uncourtly Briton, but no leſs vehement than ſincere in all his feelings, was extreme and great in every thing, was incapable of feeling or inſpiring any other than a violent attachment.

The ſevere virtue of the noble ſtoick alarmed the Marchioneſs. She reſolved to paſs for a widow during the abſence of her huſband, which ſhe found no difficulty in doing, as they were both ſtrangers in Rome, and as the Marquis was with his regiment in the Emperour's ſervice. Lord Edward's paſſion did not ſuffer him long to defer a propoſal of marriage; the Marchioneſs alledged the difference of religion and other pretexts. At length, forming a connexion which had all the intimacy of marriage but without its ſanction, they continued it till Lord Edward, diſcovering that the huſband of his miſtreſs was living, came to a rupture with her, after loading her with the bittereſt reproaches which his rage, at finding himſelf guilty without knowing it of a crime he held in horrour, could ſuggeſt.

The Marchioneſs, no leſs formidable by her total want of principle than by her ingenuity and her charms, left nothing untryed to keep him, and at laſt ſucceeded. All that was criminal in their intercourſe ceaſed; in every other reſpect the intimacy continued. Unworthy as ſhe was to love, ſhe felt the full force of that ennobling paſſion, ſhe was reduced to the neceſſity of ſeeing, and ſeeing only, the man ſhe

adored, whom ſhe could preſerve on no other terms; and this cruel, but voluntary ſelf-denial irritating the deſires of both, they became more ungovernable by conſtraint. The Marchioneſs tryed every means to make her lover forget his reſolutions; but her charms and careſſes were equally ineffectual. Lord Edward remained unmoved; his great ſoul was inacceſſible to guilt. The firſt of his paſſions was virtue; he would have ſacrificed his life to his miſtreſs, and his miſtreſs to his duty. Once, when the temptation became too powerful, the means he was on the point of adopting to ſhake it off checked the Marchioneſs, and ſhowed her the inefficacy of her attempts. The tyranny in which our ſenſes hold us is not owing to our weakneſs, but to our depravity. Whoever fears death leſs than guilt will never be guilty againſt his will.

There are few of thoſe energetick ſouls that exert an irreſiſtable attraction upon others, and raiſe them to their own ſphere; but there are ſome, and Lord Edward's was of this number. The Marchioneſs hoped to work upon him in time, but the only change that took place was in her own ſentiments. While the precepts of virtue fell from his lips in the accents of love, he moved, he penetrated her even to tears: the ſacred flame reached her groveling heart, which, for the firſt time, felt that juſtice and honour have a charm; ſhe began to have a reliſh for the truely beautiful: if innate depravity

could ever be corrected, the Marchioneſs might hope for ſuch a reformation.

Love only had any part in the effect of theſe ſlight emotions, and the Marchioneſs's paſſion became more delicate and more generous: with a conſtitution of fire, and in a climate where the empire of the ſenſes is ſo deſpotick, ſhe forgot her own pleaſures, to ſtudy thoſe of her lover; and, as ſhe could not partake them, reſolved at leaſt that he ſhould owe them to her. This was the favourable interpretation ſhe gave to a meaſure which, to thoſe who knew her character, and her knowledge of Lord Edward's. might paſs for no more than a refinement of ſeduction.

She ſpared neither trouble nor expenſe in the reſearches ſhe cauſed to be made all over Rome for a young perſon, tractable, and to be depended on; ſuch a one was found with ſome difficulty. One evening, after a converſation more than ordinarily tender, ſhe preſented her to Lord Edward: "Diſpoſe of her (ſaid ſhe with a ſmile) let her reap the harveſt of my love, but let that happineſs be confined to her. It is enough for me, if her charms ſometimes make you think of her to whom you owe the enjoyment of them." She attempted to retire, Lord Edward held her: "Stop! (ſaid he) if you think me contemptible enough to take advantage of your offer in your own houſe, the ſacrifice you make is of little value, and your regret is thrown away upon a moſt unworthy object."—"Since you cannot be mine

(ſaid

(ſaid the Marchioneſs) I would not willingly ſee you another's; but, if love muſt reſign his rights, allow him at leaſt to chooſe a ſucceſſor. Why ſhould my preſent be unacceptable to you? Are you afraid of becoming ungrateful?" She then obliged him to take Laura's addreſs (ſo the girl was called) and made him ſwear he would renounce for ever all other connexions. It was impoſſible not to be moved, and he was greatly ſo. He found it harder to reſtrain his gratitude than his paſſion, and this was the only dangerous ſnare the Marchioneſs ever laid for him.

This lady, who, like her lover, did nothing by halves, made Laura ſup with her, as if to celebrate with greater pomp the moſt painful ſacrifice that love ever made. Lord Edward indulged without reſerve the tranſports that overpowered him: every look was animated; every geſture prompted by the moſt exquiſite ſenſibility; every word dictated by the moſt ardent paſſion. Notwithſtanding Laura's charms, he ſcarcely looked at her. She did not imitate his indifference; ſhe looked, and ſaw in the true picture of love an object with which ſhe was utterly unacquainted.

After ſupper the Marchioneſs ſent away Laura, and remained alone with her lover. She had foreſeen the danger that awaited him in the preſent *tête-à-tête*, and ſo far her hopes were realized: but when ſhe expected he would ſink under it, ſhe was miſtaken: all her efforts ended

ended in making the triumph of virtue more glorious and more painful to both. The admiration which St. Preux expreſſes of his friend's firmneſs, towards the end of the fourth part of *Julia*, refers to the incidents of this evening.

Lord Edward was virtuous, but he was a man. He poſſeſſed all the unaffected plainneſs of true honour, and was unacquainted with thoſe factitious decencies which are ſubſtituted in its place, and which the world ſeems to value ſo highly. After ſome days paſſed with the Marchioneſs in unavailing ſtruggles, he found the danger increaſe, and, to ſhun his impending defeat, choſe rather to ſin againſt delicacy than virtue—He went to ſee Laura.

She ſtarted at ſight of him: obſerving her buried in melancholy, he undertook to diſſipate it, and did not imagine that much pains would be neceſſary to ſucceed. He met with more difficulty than he had apprehended. His careſſes were ill received, and his offers rejected with an air that never accompanies thoſe refuſals which are the preliminaries of a grant.

So ſtrange a reception ſtimulated, inſtead of diſguſting him. Was he to ſhow a girl of this deſcription the ſame deference as a woman of honour? He exerted his privilege without ſcruple. Laura, ſpite of her cries, her tears, her reſiſtance, finding herſelf overpowered, makes a laſt effort, ſprings to the other extremity of the room, and cries, with a peculiar animation of voice, "Kill me, then; you ſhall never effect

your

your purpoſe otherwiſe." Her looks, her geſtures her attitude ſpoke too plainly to be miſunderſtood. Lord Edward, in an aſtoniſhment impoſſible to be conceived, collects himſelf, takes her by the hand, makes her ſit down, ſeats himſelf by her, and fixing his eyes on her in ſilence, waits without impatience for the *denouēment* of the comedy.

She uttered not a word, but kept her eyes fixed on the ground; the quickneſs of her reſpiration, the violent beating of her heart, every thing about her betrayed unutterable agitation. Lord Edward, at laſt breaking ſilence, aſked her what was the meaning of that extraordinary ſcene? "Have I made a miſtake? (ſaid he.) You are not, perhaps, Lauretta Piſana."—"Ah! would to Heaven I were not (ſaid ſhe, with a trembling voice.)"—"What! (replied he, with an inſulting ſmile) you have then, I ſuppoſe, renounced your former profeſſion."—"No (ſaid ſhe) I am ſtill the ſame; thoſe who have been once what I am are never any thing elſe." This expreſſion, and the accent with which it was accompanied, appeared to him ſo extraordinary that he knew not what to think, and ſuſpected the girl had loſt her ſenſes. "But why then, charming Laura (continued he) am I the only excluded perſon? How have I incurred your hatred?"—"My hatred! (cried ſhe, with ſtill greater vivacity) think you I loved thoſe I admitted? You, and you alone, I can never ſuffer to come near me."

"But

"But why, Laura? explain yourſelf: I do not underſtand you."—"And do you think I underſtand myſelf! All I know is, that you ſhall never come near me—No! (exclaimed ſhe, with violence) Never! Were I to find myſelf in your arms, I ſhould recollect that they encircled a proſtitute, and I ſhould die of rage and deſpair."

Her dejection leſſened as ſhe ſpoke; but Lord Edward ſaw in her eyes expreſſions of deſpair and grief that melted him. Avoiding every mark of diſrepect, he aſſumed an air of kindneſs and attention. She hid her face; ſhe ſhunned his looks. He took her affectionately by the hand. As ſoon as ſhe felt his hand ſhe bent over it eagerly, and preſſed it to her lips, bathing it with her tears, and ſobbing as if her heart would burſt.

This language, though ſufficiently intelligible, was not explicit. It was with difficulty Lord Edward brought her to ſpeak to him more plainly. Modeſty, ſo long extinguiſhed in her breaſt, returned with love, and Laura had never felt ſo much ſhame in proſtituting her perſon as now in acknowledging her love.

The birth and maturity of this extraordinary paſſion were the work of almoſt the ſame moment. Laura was lively and good-natured, with charms enough to inſpire an attachment, and ſenſibility enough to ſhare it. But ſold by unworthy parents in her earlieſt youth, her charms, ſullied by libertiniſm, had loſt their

empire.

empire. Carried away in a vortex of degrading pleaſures, love fled before her; the wretched ſeducers of female innocence are incapable of feeling or inſpiring that generous paſſion. The moſt combuſtible bodies do not take fire of themſelves; let but a ſpark approach, and a conflagration follows. The tranſports of Lord Edward and the Marchioneſs had the ſame effect on the heart of Laura. At a language ſo new to her, a thouſand delicious ſentiments thrilled to her heart; her ears devoured every accent, her eyes every motion. The humid flame that darted from the lovers eyes pierced through her's, and reached her very vitals; her blood ran boiling through her veins; at every accent that fell from him, her whole frame trembled in uniſon; the emotions viſible in every geſture, the paſſion ſtamped on every feature of Lord Edward paſſed into Laura. Thus the firſt image ſhe ſaw of love made her love the object in whom ſhe ſaw it. Had Lord Edward been indifferent to the Marchioneſs, Laura perhaps would have been indifferent to Lord Edward.

Her agitation was far from ſubſiding on her return home. The firſt ſenſations of a riſing paſſion are irreſiſtibly delicious; for a moment ſhe acquieſced in an enjoyment ſo new to her; that moment paſſed, ſhe opened her eyes upon herſelf. For the firſt time of her life ſhe ſaw what ſhe was, and the ſight ſtruck her with horrour. All the encouragement of hope, all the motives of deſire, which fan the flame in

others,

others, extinguiſhed her's in deſpair. In the poſſeſſion of the man ſhe loved, ſhe ſaw only the ignominy of an abject and vile being, loaded at once with careſſes and contempt; in the gratification of the paſſion ſhe felt nothing but the infamy of mercenary proſtitution. Her own deſires were her greateſt torments; the eaſier it was to ſatisfy them, the more the horrour of her ſituation increaſed; without honour, without hope. without reſource, ſhe became acquainted with love, only to regret the impoſſibility of enjoying its ſweets. Thus began her ſufferings, which never were to end; thus ended her happineſs, which had laſted but a moment.

The riſing paſſion that humbled her in her own eyes exalted her in the eye of Lord Edward. When he found her capable of loving, he deſpiſed her no more. But what conſolation had he to give her? What had he to beſtow on her, except thoſe weak emotions that riſe in a generous heart no longer its own maſter, in favour of an object more to be pitied than deſpiſed, and bereft of every ſentiment of honour, but ſo much as was neceſſary to feel its own ſhame?

He conſoled her, however, as well as he could, and promiſed to come again to ſee her. He ſaid not a word of her way of life, not even to exhort her to quit it. To what purpoſe ſhould he increaſe her horrour of it, ſeeing that very horrour was already drawing her to deſperation? Every word on ſuch a ſubject muſt ſeem to have a particular intention, muſt ſeem to leſſen the diſtance between

between them, and render poſſible an event which could never take place. The greateſt misfortune of proſtitution is, that to remain in, or quit it, is equal infamy.

After a ſecond viſit, Lord Edward, with a munificence peculiar to his countrymen, ſent her a japanned cabinet, and a number of rich Engliſh trinkets. She ſent him back the whole, with this billet: "I have loſt the right of refuſing a preſent, yet I have the preſumption to ſend back your's; for, perhaps, you did not intend it as an expreſſion of your contempt. If you return it, it muſt of neceſſity be accepted; but how cruel a generoſity is your's!"

Lord Edward was ſtruck with a billet, dictated at once by humility and pride. Without ſtruggling againſt the infamy attached to her profeſſion, Laura diſplayed a kind of dignity under it. She almoſt effaced her ignominy by her eagerneſs in ſubmitting to it. He had ceaſed to deſpiſe, he now began to eſteem her. He continued to viſit her, but without offering to make another preſent, and though he took no pride in the paſſion ſhe felt for him, he could not help being pleaſed with it.

He did not conceal his viſits from the Marchioneſs: beſides that he had no reaſon, it would have been an act of ingratitude to do ſo. She wiſhed to be acquainted with every circumſtance of thoſe viſits. He ſwore that the laſt familiarities had never paſſed between him and Laura. This inſtance of ſelf-denial had an effect

quite

quite the contrary of what he expected. "What! (exclaimed the Marchioneſs in a rage) you viſit Laura, and the laſt familiarities have not paſſed between you? What brings you then to ſee her?" This gave birth to that infernal jealouſy, which produced ſo many attempts on the lives of Lord Edward and Laura, and devoured the heart that harboured it till it was extinguiſhed in death.

There were other circumſtances which raiſed this ungovernable paſſion to its greateſt height, and brought back the Marchioneſs to her true character. I have already obſerved, that Lord Edward, in the unſtudied probity of his heart, had no idea of delicacy. He preſented to the Marchioneſs the cabinet and jewels which Laura had refuſed, and ſhe accepted his preſent, not out of avarice, but becauſe their intimacy warranted an interchange of that nature, in which, to own the truth, the Marchioneſs was no loſer. Unluckily ſhe came to know the firſt deſtination of this preſent, and how it happened to revert to her. There is no occaſion to add, that the ſame moment ſaw this diſcovery made and the whole thrown out of the windows. Judge what the rage of ſlighted love, and the pride of inſulted quality, made her feel in that inſtant.

Still, the more Laura felt her ſhame, the leſs ſhe endeavoured to ſhake it off; ſhe reſigned herſelf to it through deſpair, and the diſdain with which ſhe viewed herſelf reached the profligates

ſligates who courted her favours. She was not proud—what right had ſhe to be ſo? But a profound ſenſe of ignominy, which it was in vain to check—the deſperate melancholy of ſhame, for ever preſent to itſelf, though for ever ſhunned—the indignation of a heart that feels itſelf worthy of reſpect, though covered with infamy—all theſe embittered the enjoyments abhorred by love, and turned the odious pleaſures into remorſe and diſguſt. A reſpect unknown to theſe degraded beings made them lay aſide the manners of libertiniſm; an involuntary diſturbance poiſoned their tranſports, and, compaſſionating the fate of their victim, they retired weeping for her, and bluſhing for themſelves

She continued a prey to the melancholy which conſumed her, and Lord Edward, whoſe friendſhip for her grew ſtronger every day, ſaw that ſhe was too much afflicted, and that her dejection ſhould rather be diminiſhed than increaſed. His preſence did much towards conſoling her—his converſation did more, it removed by degrees her deſpair. The grandeur and elevation of his ſentiments paſſed as it were into her ſoul, and reſtored its long-loſt vigour. What effects might not be expected from leſſons delivered by an adored lover, and ſinking into a heart given up by fortune to infamy, but formed by nature for virtue? In ſuch a heart the ſeeds once ſown were ſeen to bring forth fruit an hundred fold.

By theſe humane attentions he brought her at length to think better of herſelf. "If there be

no diſgrace truely indelible but that which attends actual depravity, I feel within myſelf the means of effacing my ſhame. I can never eſcape contempt, but I ſhall ceaſe to merit it; I ſhall ceaſe to deſpiſe myſelf. Having thrown off the load of vice, that of contempt may be more eaſily bor'n. What ſignifies to me the ſcorn of the whole world, while I poſſeſs the eſteem of Lord Edward? Let him but look at the work of his own hands, and take delight in it, that alone will make me amends for every thing. Though honour ſhould gain nothing by it, love will. Yes! let me give to the heart he enflames a habitation more worthy of him. Delicious ſentiment! Never will I again profane thy tranſports. Happineſs is placed for ever beyond my reach. I know it. But, ſince to beſtow on me the careſſes of love would be to profane them, never will I admit any other."

Her agitation was too violent to laſt long; but when ſhe endeavoured to quit the way of life that cauſed it ſhe found a thouſand unforeſeen obſtacles in her way. She perceived that the woman who has abdicated her right to her own perſon cannot recover it when ſhe will, and that reputation is a kind of legal barrier, the removal of which leaves the perſon who has loſt it very defenſeleſs. She had but one way to eſcape her perſecutors, which was to throw herſelf ſuddenly into a convent, and abandon her houſe in ſome ſort to pillage; for ſhe lived in that opulence ſo common among thoſe of her profeſſion,

profeſſion, eſpecially in Italy, while they have the double advantage of youth and beauty. She had ſaid nothing of her project to Lord Edward, conceiving that to mention it before its execution would be to deſtroy its whole value. As ſoon as ſhe reached her aſylum, ſhe informed him of it by a billet, and entreated his protection againſt certain powerful perſons, who intereſted themſelves in the continuance of her profligacy, and were likely to be offended at her retreat. He reached her houſe time enough to ſave her effects. An opulent nobleman, as venerable by his worth as reſpectable by his rank, pleading with force the cauſe of virtue, ſoon found in Rome, though a ſtranger there, ſufficient credit to keep her in her convent, and even to ſecure to her when there the payment of an annuity left her by the cardinal to whom her parents had ſold her.

He went to ſee her. She was beautiful, penitent, and in love: to him ſhe owed all ſhe was—all ſhe was likely to be. What powerful claims upon ſuch a heart as his! He came full of all thoſe ſentiments which virtuous hearts carry with them to virtuous actions, and wanted only that one which was neceſſary to her happineſs, and which it was not in his power to feel. Never did hope flatter her ſo ſtrongly; in the tranſports of her joy ſhe felt herſelf already in that ſtate to which thoſe who have once fallen from it ſo ſeldom re-aſcend. "Yes (ſaid ſhe) I am no longer vile; a virtuous man makes me the

object

object of his cares. Love, I no longer regret the tears you extort, the ſighs you prompt; you have already overpaid me all. To you I owe my ſtrength; to you the recompenſe that crowns it: when you taught me to love my duties, you became the firſt and greateſt of them. What an extacy of happineſs reſerved for me alone! It is love that elevates and inſpires me; love that reſcues me from infamy and guilt; never can that divine paſſion quit my heart but when virtue goes along with it. Yes, Lord Edward, if ever I become vile, I muſt firſt ceaſe to love you!"

The circumſtance of her withdrawing from the world made a noiſe. Thoſe degenerate ſouls, who judge of others by themſelves, could not imagine that Lord Edward was prompted in this affair by the impulſe of virtue alone. So much attention beſtowed on a perſon ſo amiable could not fail to excite ſuſpicion. The Marchioneſs, who had ſpies every where, came firſt to hear it, and in the violence of her rage completed the divulgation of her own intrigue. The report of it reached the Marquis at Vienna, and brought him to Rome the following winter, to receive in the thruſt of a ſword the reparation of his offended honour.

Thus commenced that double connexion, which, in a country like Italy, expoſed Lord Edward to a thouſand dangers of a thouſand different kinds; ſometimes on the part of an injured ſoldier, ſometimes on that of a jealous and vindictive woman, and ſometimes from the lo-

vers

vers of Laura, whom her loſs had driven to all the madneſs of rage. A connexion ſingularly ſtrange, which, atoning for its dangers by no gratification, divided him between two adoring miſtreſſes, without a poſſibility of poſſeſſing either; rejected by the courteſan whom he did not love, and rejecting the woman of honour whom he did; never ſwerving from virtue, it is true, but making that ſacrifice to his paſſions which he thought he made to virtue alone.

It is not eaſy to ſay what kind of ſympathy could unite two characters ſo oppoſite as thoſe of Lord Edward and the Marchioneſs; yet, ſpite of this diſparity, they could never wholly unlooſe the ties that bound them to each other. The deſpair of that violent woman may eaſily be conceived, when ſhe imagined that ſhe had given herſelf a rival (and ſuch a rival too!) by her imprudent generoſity. Scorn, reproach, outrage, threats, careſſes, every thing was employed to detach Lord Edward from ſo unworthy an intercourſe, in which ſhe could never believe his heart had no ſhare. He remained unmoved—he had made a promiſe. Laura had limited her hopes and her happineſs to the pleaſure of ſeeing him ſometimes. Her virtue, yet unconfirmed, had occaſion for ſupport, and the foſtering care of him whoſe work it was, was neceſſary to bring it to maturity. This was his excuſe to himſelf; in which, perhaps, he unknowingly concealed ſome part of the truth. Where is the man ſo rigidly ſevere, as to turn

away from the looks of a charming object, who aſks no more than a ſufferance of her paſſion? Where is the honeſt heart, from which the tears of two bright eyes will not extort one ſtruggling ſigh? Where the benevolent mind, whoſe virtuous ſelf-love is not gratified by the ſight of the happineſs it beſtows? He had made Laura too eſtimable to give her nothing more than his eſteem. The Marchioneſs, unable to prevail on him to quit the hapleſs girl, became furious; not having the courage to abandon him, ſhe conceived a kind of horrour for him. When ſhe ſaw his carriage approach, ſhe ſhuddered; when ſhe heard his tread on the ſtairs, rage and terrour ſhook her whole frame. His preſence threw her into a paroxyſm of contending paſſions: during his ſtay ſhe beheld him with pain; at his departure ſhe loaded him with imprecations: during his abſence tears of indignation burſt from her continually, and ſhe talked of nothing but vengeance. Her ſanguinary reſentment ſuggeſted to her projects worthy only of herſelf. Lord Edward was ſeveral times attacked, on coming out of Laura's convent, by bravoes ſhe hired. She laid ſeveral ſnares for Laura herſelf, to engage her to come abroad and have her carried off. All this could not cure Lord Edward. Eſcaping from her bravoes over night, he returned to her the next morning; by his chimerical project of bringing her to reaſon, he endangered his own, and augmented his weakneſs by indulging his zeal.

In a few months after, the Marquis, ill cured of his wound, died in Germany, perhaps of grief for his wife's bad conduct. This event, which ſhould have removed the barrier between Lord Edward and the Marchioneſs, ſerved only to ſtrengthen it. Her eagerneſs to take advantage of the recovery of her liberty affrighted him. The bare doubt whether the Marquis's wound might not have contributed to his death checked the ſuggeſtions of his heart, and ſilenced all its deſires. The rights of a huſband, would he ſay to himſelf, die with him with regard to every one except his murtherer, againſt whom they riſe from the grave, and ſtare him in the face. Though humanity, though virtue, though the laws were ſilent on this point, would not reaſon alone teach us, that the pleaſures attached to the perpetuation of the human ſpecies ſhould not be the price of human blood; otherwiſe the ſource of life would become the inſtrument of death, and mankind would periſh by the means deſtined to preſerve them.

He paſſed many years in this manner, divided between two miſtreſſes, in wavering irreſolution; often wiſhing to renounce both, and never able to quit either; repelled by reaſon, attracted by inclination, and rivetted faſter in his chains by every effort he made to break them; yielding ſometimes to paſſion, and ſometimes to duty, and, unable to remain any where, going eternally from London to Rome, and from Rome to London; always ardent, eager, impaſſioned, never weak

nor guilty, and owing to the greateſt and beſt of hearts that ſtrength which he imagined was the work of his reaſon. Every day meditating follies, every day rejecting the folly he meditated, and ready to break his unworthy chains. It was in the firſt moments of diſguſt that he was near attaching himſelf to Julia, and it appears certain he would have done ſo, if he had not found the place occupied.

However, the Marchioneſs loſt every day, by her vices, the ground which Laura gained by her virtues. The perſeverance on both ſides was the ſame, but the merit unequal; and the Marchioneſs, with the uſual degradation of habitual vice, ended in employing her hopeleſs paſſion on thoſe ſubſtitutes which that of Laura had been unable to endure. At each return to Italy Lord Edward diſcovered new perfections in Laura. She had learned Engliſh; ſhe had by heart all he had recommended her to read; ſhe completed herſelf in every kind of knowledge he ſeemed to value: ſhe endeavoured to mould her ſoul on his, and what remained of the original features was no diſgrace to the model. She was at that time of life when every additional year gives additional beauties; the Marchioneſs' charms, having paſſed the period of increaſe, were condemned to daily decay; and though ſhe had that air of ſenſibility which pleaſes and penetrates; though ſhe ſpoke decently enough of humanity, fidelity, and virtue, her diſcourſe became ridiculous contraſted with her conduct;

her

her reputation belied her words. Lord Edward knew her too well to entertain any further hope of her. He diſengaged himſelf by degrees, without being able to do ſo entirely; and, though making a conſtant progreſs towards indifference, he never reached the goal. His heart led him to the Marchioneſs, his feet carried him to her houſe by an involuntary motion. No efforts can eraſe from a feeling heart the ſentiment of an intimacy that once conſtituted its happineſs. By dint of intrigues, plots, and machinations, ſhe came at laſt to poſſeſs his entire contempt; but he deſpiſed without ceaſing to pity her, and was never able to forget, either what he had owed to her love, or had felt for her charms.

Thus, tyranniſed by his habits, rather than his inclinations, Lord Edward found it impoſſible to break the ties that attached him to Rome. The charms of domeſtick happineſs made him wiſh to become a huſband and a father before he grew old. Sometimes he accuſed himſelf, not only of injuſtice, but ingratitude, towards the Marchioneſs, and imputed to her paſſion the vices of her nature. Sometimes he forgot Laura's firſt way of life, and his heart involuntarily overleaped the barrier that ſeparated them for ever. Still juſtifying by reaſon the ſeductions of inclination, he ſaw in his laſt journey to Rome nothing more than a deſire of trying his friend, while he expoſed himſelf to a tryal, under which,

which, without his friend's aſſiſtance, he would have ſunk immediately,

The ſucceſs of this enterpriſe and the *denouëment* of the ſcenes which relate to it, are to be found at large in the twelfth letter of the fifth part, and the third of the ſixth, which, added to the preceding ſhort narrative, completes the ſtory. Lord Edward, beloved by two miſtreſſes without poſſeſſing either, appears at firſt ſight in a laughable ſituation. But his virtue gave him within himſelf a gratification ſweeter than the enjoyment of beauty—a gratification without meaſure as without end. More happy in the pleaſures he abſtained from, than the voluptuary is in thoſe he exhauſts, he loved longer, continued free, and enjoyed life more than thoſe who waſte it. Blind as we are, we each waſte an exiſtence in the purſuit of different chimeras, and refuſe to ſee, that, of all the illuſions of humanity, thoſe of the juſt man alone lead to happineſs.

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